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A COMPANION TO THE ACHAEMENID PERSIAN EMPIRE

Volume I

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WILEY Blackwell

This edition first published 2021
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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data applied for

Hardback: 9781119174288

Cover design: Wiley

Cover image: An ancient sculpture of Achaemenid Empire, Bisotun (Province of Kermānshāh, Iran), Relief of Darius I: Auramazdā (Photo B. Jacobs)

Set in 11/13.5pt Galliard by Straive, Pondicherry, India

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

These volumes are dedicated to the Memory of Mohammad A. Dandamayev (1928–2017) and David B. Stronach (1931–2020).

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SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

Bruno Jacobs and Robert Rollinger

In 262 CE an army of Roman and Greek forces, led by the Roman Marianus (then probably governor of the Roman province of Achaea/Greece), gathered at Thermopylae to ward off an expected attack by Gothic invaders from the north.¹ In the wake of the military preparations to defend the pass, Marianus addressed the assembled Greek soldiers and fired up their emotions by referring to the achievements of their ancestors. This splendid episode was discovered only recently on a palimpsest in the Austrian National Library and convincingly identified as a fragment of the lost *Scythica* of the Greek author Herennius Dexippus (third century CE). The episode runs as follows:

(7) ‘O Greeks, the occasion of our preservation for which you are assembled and the land in which you have been deployed are both truly fitting to evoke the memory of virtuous deeds. For your ancestors, fighting in this place in former times, did not let Greece down and deprive it of its free state, for they fought bravely in the Persian wars and in the conflict called the Lamian war, and when they put to flight Antiochus, the despot from Asia, at which time they were already working in partnership with the Romans who were then in command. (8) So perhaps it may be good fortune, in accordance with the *daimonion*, that it has been allotted to the Greeks to do battle against the barbarians in this region (indeed your own principles of fighting the wars have turned out to be valid in the past). But you may take confidence in both your preparation for these events and the strength of the region – as a result of which, in previous attacks you seemed terrifying to the enemies’. (Codex *Vindobonensis Hist. gr.* 73, ff. 192^v–193^r after Mallan and Davenport 2015: p. 206)

A Companion to the Achaemenid Persian Empire, Volume I, First Edition.

Edited by Bruno Jacobs and Robert Rollinger.

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The passage is remarkable for many reasons. On the one hand, it reveals a specific *lieu de mémoire* where the Persian Wars (actually the “Median [Wars]”: *tois Mēdikois*) still had some relevance during the Roman Empire. On the other hand, at least in our text, this relevance is of somewhat reduced significance. Whereas from a modern perspective a battle at the famous site of Thermopylae would above all call to mind the celebrated event of 480 BCE, the Roman perspective of the third century CE is a rather different one.² To be sure, Thermopylae is still a battlefield that recalls the invasion by the Achaemenid Persian Empire, but this is just one event among others, and, as it appears, not the most important one. Thermopylae seems to be about equally significant as the location of a comparable event during the Lamian War (323–322 BCE), and both occurrences are far outstripped by the Syrian War (192–188 BCE): this was the war that Rome fought against the Seleucid king Antiochus III (223–187 BCE), and it is Antiochus – and not primarily the Persians – who is introduced as the ultimate representative of Asian hubris, threat, and outreach. What can we learn from this episode and what is its relevance in the introduction to a new Companion to the Achaemenid Persian Empire?

Historians are nowadays well aware of the fact that their understanding and reconstruction of history are shaped both by tradition and by the view of past and present current in their own time. But it is not always easy for them to escape from this situation and find their own perspective.

From the very beginning, reconstruction of the history of the Achaemenid Persian Empire was affected by a point of view that focused primarily on two events: the first was the Persian Wars at the beginning of the fifth century BCE and the second the downfall of the empire at the end of the fourth century BCE. Both events became part of well-designed master narratives that presented the empire as a colossus with feet of clay, and the empire’s defeats were celebrated as the heroic deeds of opponents fighting for freedom against an Asian craze for the huge and spectacular. Thus, the Persian Wars became a climax in the conflict between Greek (and European) liberty and Asian despotism, and Alexander III was staged as “Alexander the Great,” a heroic conqueror king, while other relevant aspects of his “career” such as aggression, violence, and destruction moved entirely into the background. The sources that established these master narratives originated without exception from the western fringes of the empire, but this did not impair their success. On the contrary, such narratives became an integral part of classical and later European history, one that shaped perception not only of the “oriental” Other and of Asia but also of their purported European antithesis. Although, as we have seen, the importance of the Persian Wars within the general course of history was somewhat

relativized during the Roman Empire (cf. Spawforth 1994; Rollinger 2019), our view of the Achaemenid Persian Empire remained primarily determined by other sources and their presentation of the impressive defeats suffered by the Persians in the fifth and fourth centuries BCE (cf. Wiesehöfer 1992, 2002, 2003, 2013).

The resulting lopsided and distorted view is still frequently encountered, but among specialists a considerable change of perspective has taken place in the last 35 years. During the 1980s the Achaemenid History Workshops paved the way for a new understanding of the Achaemenid Persian Empire.³ This was, on the one hand, due to the development of a post-colonial approach in Ancient Studies in which Graeco- and Eurocentrism were strongly challenged. On the other hand, more and more sources in different languages and writing systems emerged from the various regions of the empire and were subjected to proper historical analysis. The result was in effect a new discipline, Achaemenid History Studies, and a complete transformation of the Achaemenid Persian Empire as an object of historical investigation: no longer conceptualized as a side-show of the Classical World, it became an entity in its own right deserving of study from a variety of angles and in a thoroughly interdisciplinary fashion. It is to this approach that the present publication is indebted.

In contrast to earlier research, which mainly looked in one direction (the West *or* the East), we conceptualize the Achaemenid Persian Empire as the center of an interrelated network that connected the Eurasian and African continents for the first time and in an entirely new way. With its outreach into the Mediterranean on the one side and toward the Central Asian and Indian worlds on the other, the Achaemenid Persian Empire established and energized a new dimension of connectivity, in which an imperial structure with its dynamic fringes was a key factor in creating and disseminating the new ideas that increasingly shaped an interconnected, proto-globalized world. This applies to numerous aspects of culture, thought, and belief, and it gives rise to new research objectives that can be achieved only within the sort of genuinely inter- and transdisciplinary framework that reflects the still very recent global turn.

The present *Companion to the Achaemenid Persian Empire* aims to approach the empire from a multi-angled and transdisciplinary perspective that takes into account all of the currently available sources, written, artistic, and archaeological. Political history (traditionally a primary focus) is now just one of many topics that illustrate the fascination and the multifaceted nature of what was truly the first empire in world history. The study of *Nachleben* and of the history of perception up to the present day is taken to be as important as the history of the empire itself, a history which is presented in its multiregional

dimensions. Apart from the introduction, the *Companion* is divided into 12 sections with a total of 110 chapters. Specialists from all over the world and from various scientific disciplines have contributed their expertise and knowledge.

During its existence there was no other political formation that could match the Achaemenid Empire in dimensions and outreach. The already huge territories of several preceding empires (those of the Assyrians, Babylonians, Egyptians, and Lydians) were united in a single state that then expanded further toward Africa, Europe, Central Asia, and India. These dimensions, as well as the empire's highly diversified natural geography, are dealt with in Sections II (Geography and Demography: chapters 1–5) and V (Structures and Communication: Chapters 53–58) of the present volume.

As already indicated, the study of the Achaemenid Persian Empire has to confront and satisfactorily address certain specific challenges. Among these is the need for a critical and balanced review of all available sources, taking into consideration each source's *Sitz im Leben*, perspective, intention, and contemporary setting. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, it is no longer adequate to come to the history of the Achaemenid Empire solely through the lens of Greek authors such as Herodotus, Ctesias, or Xenophon. The labeling of such authors, or at least some of them, as historiographers by modern scholarship obscures the fact that what they present is by no means history in the modern sense of the word. They are better seen as offering a literary representation of the Greeks' powerful, daunting, and fascinating eastern neighbor. Their perspective unites research and knowledge with literary creativity, fiction, and imagination, and in writing as they did, they both respected the expectations of their Greek audience, including its desire for sensational stories, and exercised their power to create and shape identities. All of this requires critical reading and investigation by the modern historian who is interested in not only a specific "view of history," literary tradition, and pattern of thought but a multifaceted approach to the historic past.

An enormous amount of indigenous written material originating inside the Achaemenid Persian Empire survives, and the stock of what is available for study is increasing all the time. The texts in question encompass royal inscriptions and archival documents in a number of languages and writing systems, originating from various contexts in the different regions of the empire. These sources must also, of course, be approached by the modern historian in a critical frame of mind. What they reveal is often an entirely different perspective from that of the western sources. They document administrative actions and decisions, processes in the royal, provincial, or regional bureaucracy, correspondence between court and officials, temple administration, trade, and entrepreneurship, crime and punishment, and even, if only in glimpses, daily

life, but also royal self-presentation, ideology, and the self-perception of Great Kings who were convinced that they ruled the world by divine favor.

Obviously, there are major obstacles and difficulties in dealing adequately with this vast amount of material. The texts are written in a variety of languages and writing systems and they belong to different local contexts and traditions. The Achaemenid Persian state was a true empire in terms of its multilingualism and its ability to bring together distinct age-old traditions of writing and thought under a single roof. There is nobody who could deal with the totality of this heterogeneous and diversified material alone. The task has to be shared and the issues discussed in a transdisciplinary approach that is interested not only in a single archive and region but in the empire as a whole. Only in this manner is it possible to evaluate the importance and quality of each individual source for the reconstruction of the political, cultural, social, economic, and religious history of the empire. It will be no surprise that there is still considerable dissent among scholars about how this can be achieved successfully and what these reconstructions might look like. These written sources in their entirety, structured according to the individual languages involved, are presented in this *Companion* in Section III-A (Written Sources: Chapters 6–14).

In recent decades, extensive archeological fieldwork has been undertaken in a wide range of the modern states and regions that are situated on the territory of the former Achaemenid Empire. It is important to stress that archeological sources of any kind are as essential as written ones for reconstructing the past and they must be taken into account appropriately by the modern historian. One aim of the *Companion* is therefore to offer an up-to-date survey of the archeological state of the art from Kazakhstan to the Sudan and from India to the Aegean. Section III-B (Archeological Sources: Chapters 15–24) presents an overview of sites, excavations, and finds, structured by major geographical regions.

Section IV (History: Chapters 25–52) is divided into three subsections: A Predecessors of the Persian Empire and Its Rise, B From Gaumāta to Alexander, and C Under Persian Rule. As is immediately obvious, it has a much wider focus than the history of the empire itself. This reflects our intention to situate and understand the empire within the broader historical developments of the first millennium BCE and their specific contexts. The empire, on the one hand, transcended the boundaries of its ancient Near Eastern predecessor states, but on the other hand it followed their general trajectories. Some of its core areas were indeed “Iranian”; nevertheless the Achaemenid Persian Empire was not an Iranian state but a multiethnic and multiregional giant that drew from age-old Near Eastern traditions while at the same time introducing novel agendas and traits. This also, incidentally, applies *mutatis mutandis* to what followed with and after the conquest of the empire by Alexander III.

Chapters 25–28 are, therefore, devoted to Media, Urartu, Assyria, Babylonia, and Elam. The great conquests of Cyrus and Cambyses are also part of subsection A, since the usurpation of the Persian throne by Darius I marks a major change in the history of the empire. Chapters 30–33 deal with the history of the Achaemenid Empire in its narrower sense, from the crisis after the death of Cambyses and Darius I's seizure of power through the fifth and fourth centuries BCE to Darius III and the conquest by Alexander.

Subsection C (Under Persian Rule: Chapters 34–52) already mediates between Sections IV and V, since it illustrates the empire's astonishing capacity to create unity from diversity. This subsection offers a survey of all the major regions of the empire and the local dimensions of its history through the 200 years of its existence. The success of the empire was due to the fact that its developed structures and bureaucracies had local as well as transregional trajectories. It is this overarching and general layout that is the main focus of Section V (Structures and Communication: Chapters 53–58). As has only become properly evident in recent years, the empire maintained already established local structures, at least to a certain extent, and developed an imperial and transregional superstructure that guaranteed its efficiency in collecting taxes and manpower and in maintaining communications between Central Asia, India, Iran, Mesopotamia, Egypt, Syria, and Anatolia.

The administrative and economic dimension of the empire's structure is the general focus of Section VI (Administration and Economy: Chapters 59–69), which is organized into three subsections: A Imperial Administration, B Local Administration, and C Economy. It has already been stressed that a major characteristic of the empire's highly developed bureaucratic apparatus was the interplay between local and transregional structures. This interplay is highlighted by a variety of sources and archives that run from Egypt across Syria, Asia Minor, and Babylonia to Fars and Central Asia. The focus is not only on structures but also on persons, and on rulers as well as the ruled, i.e. on the development of imperial elites with estates all over the empire and their transregional radius of engagement as well as on locals who kept the empire's structures going by paying taxes and delivering soldiers and manpower. The chapter also deals with transregional migration and deportations. The background to the latter is often difficult to grasp in detail; an element of punishment may sometimes be combined with a plan to develop underpopulated and economically weak regions of the empire. The economic aspect of imperial administration is more comprehensively dealt with in the last subsection, which discusses taxes and tribute, temple economy, and entrepreneurship and "banks."

Section VII (Society and Politics: Chapters 70–78) is concerned with another structural aspect, namely the sociohistorical dimension. It unfolds the social makeup of the empire, with its wide reach from slave to Great King.

Because of the source situation, the imperial centers with their residences, courts, and court life feature heavily in this context. Since the satraps in the empire's provinces tended to mirror and imitate the Great Kings' attitudes and actions, this chapter reveals an imperial dimension as well. It describes places and techniques of imperial politics, such as banqueting and gift exchange, and highlights how the king and his court dealt with diplomacy and jurisdiction. Royal enactments were staged and performed in a ceremonial setting in which clothes and insignia played an important role. But it is not only the official aspects of monarchic rule that are taken into account; attention is also paid to the Great Kings' leisure activities, among which hunting wild game loomed especially large. Finally, as in all societies throughout world history, sex and gender are an integral part of social life that have to be given appropriate consideration.

Section VIII (The Persian Empire at War: Chapters 79–82) investigates the military dimension. It goes without saying that the empire was the major military superpower of its time. Its ability to mobilize armies with manpower from all over its territory was more than impressive. Moreover, it was the first Near Eastern empire to build up a navy as an independent force that matched the quality and strength of its vast ground forces. All of this comes through in Greek reports of the so-called Persian Wars, although, ironically, these accounts do not explicitly highlight the empire's organizational and infrastructural strength in mounting a campaign by a combined land and naval force at its outmost western fringes, but instead accentuate the Great Kings' hubris and arrogance. However, Chapters 79–82 do not focus only on the organizational skills of the empire in raising and recruiting vast armies; they also investigate ideology and the specific ways in which the empire and its kings legitimated the imperial war machine.

Section IX (Religion and Worship: Chapters 83–88) deals with cult and belief in the empire. This is a subject with many facets and the six contributions cover a wide range of topics. The section is one in which dissent within modern scholarship looms particularly large. We have made a conscious choice not to harmonize these different voices and opinions but to make plain the diversity of conceptions and reconstructions found in modern research. In this way the reader can get a proper flavor of the controversies surrounding the religion of Achaemenid rulers and their elites, and of the question as to whether their belief system may be described as Zoroastrianism, Mazdaism, or neither. The section also develops a broader perspective, however, by focusing on funerary customs as well as on the diverse practices of worship encountered both within the empire's heartland and across its various regions.

Section X ("*Geistesgeschichte*," Science, and Technology: Chapters 89–93) pinpoints intellectual movements, education, and learning, as well as science and techniques. In doing so it touches on a variety of topics. Contributions on

Astronomy and Astrology, Physicians and Medicine, and Techniques of Art and Architecture (Chapters 90, 92 and 93) deal with the empire's hard sciences. School, Erudition, and Wisdom (Chapter 89) focuses on the empire's educational system, while the provocatively titled contribution on Persian "Enlightenment" (Chapter 91) draws attention to intellectual accomplishments within the empire that are commonly ascribed only to its western neighbors.

Section XI (The Perspective of Art: Chapters 94–96) introduces the major categories of artistic production in the empire. Alongside statuary, relief sculpture, and minor arts, this includes poetry, music, and dance.

The last two extensive sections of the *Companion* focus in an innovative way on the empire's *Nachleben*. This is not just an appendix but a substantive part of the book in its own right, and it demonstrates clearly that the empire survived its downfall. Section XII (Reception and Heritage: Chapters 97–105) is divided into the three subsections: A Modes of Perception, B The Local Heritage, and C Contemporary Perception. Its nine contributions guide the reader through the empire's reception history, starting with Classical Antiquity and ending with the Popular Culture of our own times. Section XIII (History of Research: Chapters 106–110) concludes the *Companion* with a balanced overview of the ways in which the empire has been investigated by researchers from the major regions of the scientific world and highlights the principal trajectories and *Leitfragen* of this research through the past 100 years and more.

It will be no surprise that this *Companion* has quite a long history of its own. From its very beginning, with the initial conceptualization of the project and the first contacts with the publishing house in Berlin in August 2009, through the invitations to contributors and the gathering and editing of the papers, and then on to the eventual publication of the volume, many years have gone by. As always, the editors planned to finish their work much earlier than actually turned out to be possible. There were many reasons for this. On the one hand, the *Companion* set itself ambitious goals. It was our aim not just to publish a further volume on the Achaemenid Persian Empire but to present an up-to-date overview of recent research that included a broad set of topics that had not previously been dealt with in such a comprehensive manner. This is especially true for the chapters on archeological research as well as for those on reception history and history of research. Many contributions to the *Companion* are therefore not just summaries but the results of very recent research agendas in their own right. On the other hand, the sheer number of contributions (110 in total) created problems of its own that had to be tackled and solved by the editors. But in the end we have made it, and we very much hope that we have been successful in presenting an overview of a kind that has never been available before.

Finally, it is our pleasure to express our gratitude to those people and colleagues without whose help the *Companion* would not have been possible.

This, of course, applies first and foremost to the 83 authors who contributed to the volume. Their competence and forbearance were essential for the result. There are also the various colleagues from the publishing house, whose friendly guidance and assistance we always enjoyed and appreciated. The editors' special thanks go to the editorial assistants at the Institut für Alte Geschichte und Altorientalistik, Universität Innsbruck, whose skill and patience made a huge contribution to the success of the editorial work: Manuel Pohl, Matthias Hoernes, Katharina Reinstadler, Sabrina Buchebner, Dolores Dollnig, Julian Degen, Florian Posselt and Clemens Steinwender. They would not have been available, of course, without generous financial assistance from the University of Innsbruck, and especially the Dean of the Historisch-Philologische Fakultät, Prof. Dr. Klaus Eisterer. Dankeschön! Very special thanks also go to Carmen Marcks-Jacobs, who adapted several plans and maps for publication in the present work. There is a German proverb that may accurately describe the long and often strenuous editorial process of this *Companion*: "Gut Ding will Weile haben." We hope that this also applies to the present publication.

NOTES

- 1 For historical context and protagonists see Mallan and Davenport 2015.
- 2 Cf. in detail Rollinger 2019.
- 3 The Achaemenid History Workshops took place between 1981 and 1990. The proceedings were published in the series *Achaemenid History* as volumes 1–8 (Leiden 1987–1994). In some respects, publications in the series *Classica et Orientalia* (Wiesbaden), especially volumes 1–3, 5–6, 13, and 15–17, 19–24 may be regarded as follow-ups to the Achaemenid History Workshops. This is certainly true so far as their scope, approach, and intention are concerned.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors are grateful to Christopher Tuplin for his assistance with the English version of this text.

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SECTION II

**GEOGRAPHY
AND DEMOGRAPHY**

CHAPTER 1

Geography and Climate

Daniel T. Potts

Any attempt to describe the geography and climate of an empire faces a formidable challenge, for by definition such supra-regional states were territorially vast and, in most cases, characterized by a wide range of physical features, ecosystems, and climates. The borders of the Achaemenid Empire transected what geographers have termed interior Asia, Europe, southwest Asia, and Africa (Brice 1966: Fig. 1). The empire included the entirety of the earlier Neo-Assyrian Empire in addition to the Iranian plateau, a good portion of western Central Asia (as far east as Sogdia), the Indo-Iranian borderlands, and parts of north Africa, including Libya to the west of Egypt and Kush (Nubia) to the south. Major bodies of water, including the Aegean, Mediterranean, Red, Black, Caspian, and Arabian Seas, the Persian Gulf, and the Gulf of Oman bounded the Achaemenid satrapies. Substantial mountain ranges, including the Taurus, Amanus, Lebanon, Anti-Lebanon, Caucasus, Zagros, Kopet Dag, and Hindu Kush, constituted significant sources of timber and minerals, as well as impediments to travel, breaking up the empire into a series of basins, plateaus, and valleys connected by natural thoroughfares – seas, rivers, mountain passes, and tracks across plains and deserts.

The fundamental ecological “facts of life” did not change with the rise of the Achaemenids, of course. The Nile Valley was not suddenly more fertile, any more than the Mesopotamian plain was suddenly more saline than it had been. The cedars of Lebanon were no less abundant than they had been under the Assyrians, notwithstanding the fact that enormous quantities of timber had been harvested and sent to the Assyrian capitals; horses were no scarcer in

Media than previously; bitumen no less abundant at Hit; and lapis lazuli was just as available in Afghanistan as ever. But the sheer size of the empire required an extraordinary effort to manage it effectively and no doubt tested the capabilities of the state administrative apparatus at the same time as it helped to build considerable managerial and logistical expertise. Efficient communication across enormous distances became a *sine qua non* of imperial success and demanded regular travel on a scale scarcely seen in any period of human history prior to the creation of the Achaemenid Empire.

Within the borders of the empire, the major mountain ranges are pierced by only half a dozen major passes and these have necessarily acted as conduits for travel across the millennia. Beginning in the east these are the Khyber pass, formed by the Kabul river as it flows through the mountains of Pakistan; the Bolan pass, which pierces the hills of southwestern Pakistan where the Nari river cuts through them; the Ardewan pass in the Hindu Kush, which opens up communication between Merv in Turkmenistan and Herat in western Afghanistan, thanks to the Kushk river; the Sefid Rud gap, which bursts through the Alburz mountains, giving access from the Caspian Sea to the Iranian plateau, near Rasht; the Zagros Gates, where the Diyala river cuts through the Zagros mountains near Bisitun, providing access from the Mesopotamian plain to the Iranian plateau in the east Tigridian region; and the Cilician Gates, where a branch of the Tarsus river pierces the Taurus mountains, providing access from the western Anatolian plateau to the Mediterranean (Brice 1966: p. 28). Other important passes include the Homs Gap or Syrian Gates, where the Orontes river has cut a gap linking the Mediterranean coast with the interior of Syria, dividing the an-Nusayriyah mountains and Jebal Zawiyah, Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon mountains; the Persian Gates, in the Mamasani region of western Fars, through which most east–west traffic has to pass between Mesopotamia and the southwest Iranian lowlands (Khuzestan) to the west and the highlands around Pasargadae and Persepolis to the east (Speck 2002); and the Kotal Dukhtar, the only pass that leads from Bushehr on the Persian Gulf northwards toward Shiraz and Persepolis (Potts 2009: p. 283). There were many more passes of local importance scattered across the Achaemenid Empire, but each of these major ones can be considered “active” before, during, and after the period in question.

If Achaemenid administrators and military commanders felt that a tyranny of distance operated within the empire, it was at least mediated by effective communications that facilitated the movement of private individuals (Waerzeggers 2010), couriers (Herrenschmidt 1993; Briant 1992), armies, and officials (Hallock 1969) on foot, camel, horse, donkey, cart, barge, and boat. For the most part, travel was undertaken along roads already in existence. These included major routes that had been traversed since prehistoric times, from southern Babylonia, up the Euphrates and Tigris, and across

northern Mesopotamia, descending into Syria and the southern Levant (Halla 1964: Fig. 6); routes leading up the Tigris from Assyria to the Anatolian heartland (Halla 1964: Fig. 6; Nashef 1987; Barjamovic 2011: p. 34); routes leading from the Levant southward into Egypt (Gardiner 1920; Potts 1982; Figuera 2000); and routes leading from southern Babylonia eastward through the Zagros Gates, on to and across the Iranian plateau (Herzfeld 1907), bound for Central Asia. Local routes, already well-trodden by the Bronze Age (e.g. Ur 2009), almost certainly continued to be used as well. Guides, fast couriers, and guard stations had been known since the Bronze Age (Barjamovic 2011: pp. 38–51) and it is unlikely that the basic modalities of travel were significantly different in the Achaemenid period. Indeed, judging by the extant literary testimonia, travel in the Achaemenid period was as efficient as it was at any time prior to the development of motorized transport.

Millions of years of erosion of the folded mountain chains throughout the Achaemenid Empire, supplemented by ongoing alluviation, resulted in the infilling of numerous plains and plateaus, and the creation of large salt basins like the Dasht-e Lut and Dasht-e Kavir in Iran. True deserts like the African Sahara or the Arabian Rub' al-Khali generally lay outside the bounds of the empire, except in Libya, but gravel plains are particularly prevalent in the eastern reaches of the Achaemenid Empire. Nor were these generally mediated by appreciable rainfall, though it is clear that precipitation varied enormously across the length and breadth of the region controlled by the Achaemenids. This is scarcely to be wondered at in an empire spanning so many degrees of latitude and longitude. From the Indo-Iranian borderlands to Libya, and from the Caucasus to Oman, an enormous range of ecosystems existed within the borders of the Achaemenid Empire (Wilkinson 2003).

Generally speaking, the climate of most of the empire may be characterized as a drier, continental variant of the Mediterranean regime (Brice 1966: p. 36). Rainfall across most of the Achaemenid Empire fell in winter, the exceptions being in parts of Central Asia (Choresmia, Sogdiana), the Indo-Iranian borderlands (Sattagydia, India), the Caucasus (Armenia), and Egypt, where summer rains, influenced in the southern districts by the monsoon, were the norm. Pockets of territory in central Anatolia, around Lakes Van and Urmia, the central Iranian plateau, Sistan, and Afghanistan received rain in both seasons (Brice 1966: Fig. 9). Just as it has been in recent times (Kouchoukos et al. 1998: p. 480), inter-annual variability in precipitation was probably great. Hyper-arid zones may have received only a few dozen millimeters of rainfall each year, while sub-tropical areas like Gilan and Mazanderan received enough rainfall to enable double-cropping (e.g. growing rice in summer and wheat/barley in winter). To cite just one extreme, modern example of inter-annual variability, unusually heavy rainfall in 1968 saw the level of Lake Urmia rise by no less than 2 m. (Bottema 1986: p. 243). Fluctuations of this sort are

generally not recorded in ancient sources, with the exception of the Babylonian astronomical diaries. In addition to containing observations on the height of the Euphrates (Slotsky 1997: pp. 88–98), these mention a wide range of meteorological phenomena, including rain showers, lightning, thunder, and tornados (e.g. Sachs and Hunger 1988: p. 71, no. 384) that characterized the Babylonian winter of 384 BCE.

With every type of environment from the sub-tropical in the north to the semi-arid steppe, arid desert, and humid coasts along the Persian Gulf and Arabian Sea in the south, Iran itself is a microcosm – if one can use such a term to describe an area three times the size of France – of the diverse range of ecosystems found across the empire. In the higher ranges of the Zagros mountains, where peaks in excess of 3000 m. above sea level can be found, heavy snowfall, perennial streams, and abundant springflow are well-attested, while on the borders of Khuzestan, Sistan, Kerman, and Baluchistan, arid conditions exist in which dry-farming is impossible without the aid of irrigation. The northerly winds of the summer, coming almost entirely from the north, cause the region to become overheated. Extreme examples, such as the 120 days' wind in Sistan (Drangiana) or the *shamal* in Mesopotamia (Assyria, Babylonia) and the Gulf region (the satrapy of the Erythraean Sea and Maka), while useful for sailors, are inhibitors of agricultural development. Still, in coastal areas where agriculture was unviable except in winter, fishing and pearling, not to mention trading, were pursued in summer. Living with drought in the more southerly satrapies of the empire would have been the norm for six months of the year whereas in the more temperate latitudes a far more Mediterranean climate was conducive to continuous agricultural production, punctuated by severe winters with heavy frosts and snowfalls, rather than hyper-arid summers.

Climate and topography necessarily had an enormous influence on flora and fauna throughout the Achaemenid Empire. Once again, given its size, it is scarcely surprising that the empire spanned the Mediterranean, Euro-Siberian, western and central Asiatic, and Saharan-Indian floristic zones. The more central portions of the empire contained an enormous range of flora, including desert, steppe, and semi-desert vegetation; sub-tropical savannah; *Pistacia* and *Quercus* woodlands; scrublands dominated by almond and juniper; conifer forests; and sub-alpine and alpine vegetation (Breckle 2007). Following the last glaciation the Zagros and Alburz mountains in Iran and the Hindu Kush/northern Afghanistan provided refuge for a large number of tree species, many of which later spread across Iran, Anatolia, and into Europe. Indications of ancient environments within the Achaemenid Empire are provided by both Achaemenid epigraphic and Greek literary sources as well as archeological data.

One of the most well-known Achaemenid sources is Darius' exposition (DSf) of the materials used in the construction of his palace at Susa (Lecoq

1997: pp. 234–237). According to Darius, the cedar used in the palace came from the mountains of Lebanon; the sissoo wood (OP *yakā*; see Gershevitch 1957) from Gandhara (northwest Pakistan) and Kerman (southeastern Iran); and the ebony (*Dalbergia melanoxylon*) from Egypt. In ancient usage, however, it is often the case that the geographical descriptor attached to a commodity is the supplier of the material rather than the actual land in which it grew or was mined. This is true in the case of Darius' ebony, the actual provenance of which was probably somewhere in sub-Saharan Africa (the current range extends from Senegal in the west to Eritrea/northern Ethiopia in the east and to Angola and the Transvaal in the south; see Hepper 1996: p. 6).

Minerals used in the palace at Susa included gold from Lydia, probably the alluvial gold of the Pactolus river (Muhly 1983: p. 7) or the slopes of nearby Mt. Tmolus (Forbes 1939: p. 244), and Bactria (northern Afghanistan and southern Uzbekistan); lapis lazuli and carnelian (?) from Sogdia; and turquoise from Chorasmia. It is doubtful whether the lapis lazuli mines at Sar-e Sang in the Hindu Kush mountains of northern Afghanistan, the major source in all periods of ancient Near Eastern history, lay within the bounds of Sogdia, which centered on the Ferghana Valley further north in what today is Uzbekistan. Herzfeld reckoned the mines were located in eastern Bactria (Herzfeld 1968: p. 323). It is perfectly reasonable to suppose, however, that the Sogdians had access to lapis lazuli from Sar-e Sang, though not that they necessarily controlled its extraction as has sometimes been assumed (La Vaissière 2004: p. 22). It is also questionable whether high-quality carnelian was available anywhere in Sogdia and more likely that if carnelian is indeed the correct translation of the term in question (OP *sinkabru*, El. *sinkabruš*, Akk. *Šingabrū*), it came from Gujarat (La Vaissière 2004: p. 21). Herzfeld suggested that carnelian was not meant here at all. Rather, he drew a parallel between the ancient term and *cinnabar* and suggested that this was “used for making the colours of the enamelled bricks of Susa” (Herzfeld 1968: p. 323, no. 3). As Pliny noted (*Nat. Hist.* 29.8), cinnabar (Gr. κιννάβαρι) or mercuric sulfate (HgS), was often confused in antiquity with *minium*, or lead oxide (Pb_3O_4), which was indeed a source of red pigment (Theophrastus, *De Lapidibus* 8.60; Eichholz 1965: p. 128). Although in the Roman and medieval periods lead oxide came mainly from Spain (Porter and Vesel 1993: p. 147; cf. Strabo, *Geog.* 12.2.10, where the Iberian is said to rival the Cappadocian variety), another source must have been available to the Achaemenids, for analyses of glazed bricks in the Louvre, presumably originating in Darius' palace or one of the later royal Achaemenid buildings at the site (Boucharlat 2010: pp. 374–384), have shown the presence of lead oxide (Bouquillon et al. 2007: pp. 132–134). Interestingly, mercury was detected in some of the bricks in the so-called Šāhūr palace of Artaxerxes II at Susa and this implies a source of cinnabar from which mercury was obtained (Boucharlat 2010: p. 408).

The Chorasmian turquoise cited by Darius most probably came from the mines in the Kyzyl Kum, southeast of the Aral Sea and north of Zerafshan (Tosi 1974: pp. 149–150).

Turning to some of the Greek literary sources, Xenophon's *Anabasis* is replete with geographical and topographic information, including the names of rivers crossed and places visited, but when describing, for example, Cyrus the Younger's passage from Cilicia to Thapsacus on the Euphrates, it scarcely offers any description of the country traversed (Xenophon, *Anab.* 1.4.11). Upon reaching "Arabia," i.e. northern Mesopotamia (Donner 1986), more description is given. According to Xenophon, "In this region the ground was entirely a plain, level as the sea. It was covered with wormwood, and whatever other kinds of shrub or reed grew on it, were all odoriferous as perfumes. But there were no trees. There were wild animals, however, of various kinds; the most numerous were wild asses [onagers, *Equus hemionus*]; there were also many ostriches, as well as bustards and antelopes" (*Anab.* 1.5.1–2). Further south, as they approached Babylonia proper, "there was neither grass, nor any sort of tree, but the whole country was completely bare. The inhabitants, who quarried and fashioned millstones near the river [Euphrates], took them to Babylon, and sold them, and lived upon corn which they bought with the money" (*Anab.* 1.5.5). This extreme barrenness is a perfectly accurate description for the time of year in which Cyrus' passage into Babylonia occurred. This has been dated to the very end of August (Watson and Ainsworth 1883: p. 260), which, with respect to the ancient Mesopotamian agricultural calendar, was after the annual harvest in July/August (Potts 1997: Table III.1). Some scholars have been puzzled by the absence of any reference to pastoral nomads and their herds in this description (e.g. Donner 1986), but from the general floral, faunal, environmental, and agricultural point of view, the description accords well with the semi-arid nature of the steppic environment in this region during the late summer. In the fourteenth/fifteenth centuries, Turcoman nomads, such as the Aq-qoyunlu, wintered in precisely this area – the steppe between Mosul on the Tigris and Raqqah and Bireçik on the Euphrates, north as far as Diyarbakır – but summered further north over an area extending from the east of Erzurum to the west of Erzincan, and almost as far north as the Black Sea (Woods 1999: Map 2). It is likely, therefore, that when Cyrus the Younger passed through, any pastoral nomads that might have frequented the region in winter had long since moved north to more temperate areas in Anatolia.

Later Greek sources compiled in the wake of Alexander's conquest provide a snapshot of environments found in the different satrapies of the Achaemenid Empire, naming rivers, mountain ranges, and other notable physical features as well as resources. The lost but heavily cited *Geographika* of Eratosthenes (Roller 2010), the later compendium of Strabo (Biffi 2002), and the histories

of Alexander's campaigns (especially Arrian's *Anabasis*) are invaluable sources of material on the landscapes of the late Achaemenid Empire. Even some of the most arid regions, like Gedrosia, produced economically (and medicinally) important resources. The flora of Gedrosia was described in considerable detail by Theophrastus (Theophrastus, *Hist. Plant.* 4.4.12–13; cf. Arrian, *Anab.* 6.22.4–8; Strabo, *Geog.* 15.2.3; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* 12.33) and included, in the interior, a myrrh-like aromatic (*bdellium*), triangular spurge (*Euphorbium antiquorum*), spikenard (sweet rush or ginger grass, *Cymbopogon schoenanthus*), asafoetida (*Scorodosma foetidum*), oleander (*Nerium odorum*), and the date palm (*Phoenix dactylifera*) as well as mangrove (*Avicennia marina*) along the coast (Eggermont 1975: pp. 120–125; cf. Bretzl 1903). Many of these species were found in Aria, Arachosia, and Parapamisadae as well (Eggermont 1975: p. 123). Such accounts, while valuable, obviously present only the smallest fraction of the economically valuable flora, let alone the complete flora of these areas. There were many more species of great utility that went unmentioned, as a glance at the literature on the economic botany of, for example, eastern Iran clearly shows (Aitchison 1890). To mention just one wood that was highly prized for woodworking, Pakistani rosewood (*Dalbergia sissoo*), known widely as sissoo throughout the region, went unmentioned, although it was common throughout the Indo-Iranian borderlands (Tengberg and Potts 1999).

Finally, archeological and in particular archeobotanical and paleoenvironmental studies at individual sites, along with regional surveys, have contributed to our knowledge of the climate and environment of the Achaemenid Empire. Studies around Gordion, in the ancient satrapy of Phrygia, for example, point to the existence of extensive non-deciduous forests, containing pine (*Pinus sylvestris*), cedar (*Cedrus libani*), and yew (*Taxus baccata*), around the site about 2500 years ago (Erinç 1978: p. 97). Deforestation of these forests only began later, accelerating during the Roman period (Brice 1978).

It is clear from analyses of cores taken from Lakes Zeribar and Mirabad in northwestern Iran that there are few signs of climatic fluctuation in the region after about 3500 BCE (van Zeist 1967: pp. 310–311; Bottema 1986: p. 259; Jones 2013). Moreover, those indications of climatic shifts that do appear at Lake Mirabad all postdate the Achaemenid period (Griffiths et al. 2001: p. 761).

However, all across the Achaemenid Empire human intervention and modification of the landscape also must have played a role. This would have included the alteration of ecosystems through agricultural intensification, including olive cultivation in Fars (Jones et al. 2015; Djamali et al. 2016) and the expansion of irrigation systems involving the building of dams, qanats, and canals. There is a widespread if often unacknowledged belief that agricultural intensification was actively pursued by the Achaemenids, e.g. in the Deh Luran

region, which lay astride the Royal Road between Susa and Babylon (Wright and Neely 2010: Fig. 6.6), but water management features are notoriously difficult to date, particularly when local masonry styles are not easily attributed to a particular period and commemorative or foundation inscriptions are absent (Boucharlat 2001: p. 178). Thus, the attribution of hydraulic features, attested archeologically, to the Achaemenid period is difficult. Moreover, even when hydraulic works mentioned in cuneiform or literary sources, or discovered in excavation, can be dated to the Achaemenid period, it is often unclear whether they resulted from centrally mandated imperial or locally driven investment, or indeed from a combination of the two. Evidence of local investment spurred by central governmental incentives can be found in Polybius' well-known discussion of qanats in Media. According to Polybius (*History* 10.28), "in this tract of country there is no water (*anhydria*) appearing on the surface, though there are many subterranean channels (*hyponomoi*) which have well-shafts (*phreatiai*) sunk to them, at spots in the desert unknown to persons unacquainted with the district. A true account of these channels has been preserved among the natives to the effect that, during the Persian ascendancy, they granted the enjoyment of the profits to the inhabitants of some of the waterless districts for five generations, on the condition of their bringing fresh water in; and that, there being many large streams flowing down Mount Taurus [Alburz], these people at infinite toil and expense constructed these underground channels through a long tract of country in such a way that the very people who now use the water are ignorant of the sources from which the channels are originally supplied."

This clearly indicates that the Achaemenid government actively provided incentives for local investment in qanat construction and maintenance in Media. Less certain is whether or not the same policy operated elsewhere in the empire. Many scholars have inferred from Polybius' statement that under the Achaemenids, "qanat technology spread well beyond the confines of the Iranian Plateau" and, as a result of the policy of land grants, "thousands of new settlements were established and others expanded" as "qanats were constructed from Mesopotamia to the shores of the Mediterranean as well as southward into parts of Egypt and Arabia" (English 1998: p. 189; cf. Goblot 1979: pp. 70–71; Rahimi-Laridjani 1988: pp. 445–447; Lightfoot 2000: p. 218). As Briant has stressed, however, it is important to remember that Polybius explicitly attributed the investment in qanats to private enterprise, rewarded with long-term land tenure (over five generations), not state investment (Briant 2001: p. 18). The recently excavated qanat system at 'Ayn Manāwīr in the Kharga Oasis (Egypt), constructed during the fifth century BCE according to Demotic ostraca dated in the reigns of Artaxerxes I and Darius II, may reflect "a decision issued from the court at Memphis" and "could have been the decision of the Persian central power under the control

of the Satrap of Egypt and his administration” (Wuttmann et al. 2000: pp. 3–5), but this is far from proven. A decentralized approach to water capture and management, even if disseminated from the top down, may have been left to local administrators to implement (Cruz-Urbe 2003: p. 543).

Even in Babylonia, a satrapy of central importance, both fiscally and agriculturally, to the Achaemenid crown, “the extent to which the crown itself was responsible for the improvements in the [irrigation] system rather than merely benefiting from them by right of conquest” is unclear (Adams 1981: p. 187). Although A.L. Oppenheim believed that Achaemenid Babylonia was characterized by “new installations, new techniques, [and] better utilization of the available water” (Oppenheim 1985: p. 578), and the Great King owned many canals (Dandamayev 1992: p. 13), it is not always clear whether the contributions of the crown to canal construction were greater than those of private landowners (Joannès 2004: pp. 214–216). Indeed, in comparison with the number of references to canal construction and maintenance in the Neo-Babylonian period credited to individual kings (Cole and Gasche 1999: pp. 102–105), the paucity of references in the Achaemenid period could be construed as a sign that the Achaemenids were content to use the infrastructure they had inherited in Babylonia without investing much in the upkeep or expansion of the canal system themselves, notwithstanding the fact that the agricultural yields there continued to be impressive (Wiesehöfer 1999: p. 174). This, however, would be wrong. Like their predecessors, the Achaemenid administrators responsible for Babylonia attended to the upkeep and expansion of the irrigation network, but they were able to see that the great institutions in the land, principally the temples, bore the lion’s share of the costs. Thus, in one text concerning a rent farmer, dated to the second year of Darius I’s reign, reference is made to “digging on the main canals at the expense of the treasury of Eanna” (i.e. the large temple complex at Uruk). Another text (Dar. 9) from the reign of Darius attests to the involvement of the Shamash temple at Sippar in the digging and cleaning of canals that ran through its property, as well as the involvement of a consortium identified as “the chiefs of the chariots” (van Driel 1988: p. 129, citing TCL 13: 182). In van Driel’s opinion, these were major maintenance projects “supervised by the royal administration which shared out the burden among the great institutional and private landholders who in their turn had to make their financial, material, and human resources available” (van Driel 1988: p. 129). At the same time, as van Driel has noted, “Temples and owners of big estates were certainly capable of digging branch canals of lesser importance on their own” (van Driel 1988: p. 130). Finally, it is telling that the central administration in Achaemenid Babylonia leased entire canals, “from intake to tail,” to entrepreneurs, a handy source of income, and that these private persons aggressively established date plantations on land adjacent to canals and rivers (van Driel 1988: p. 145).

This anthropogenic expansion of gardens, previously much less visible in the cuneiform record, undoubtedly altered the micro-environment of the region, just as afforestation has in many parts of the world (e.g. Abu Dhabi) in our own time.

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CHAPTER 2

Demoscopy and Demography

Josef Wiesehöfer

Object of Research and Method

The object of demographic history is the description and explanation of the size, structure, and development of (ancient) populations in their relationship to living space. It should be noted that there are natural and uncontrollable determinants of population development as well as controllable ones, and that the interwoven determinants can simultaneously be cause and effect of such development. So far, ancient demographic history has particularly been interested in ancient views of population development, questions of the size of ancient populations (at a particular point in time or over a particular period of time), the age and gender structures of ancient societies, and particular determinants of population development such as life expectancy, marriage practices, reproduction, and fertility, and population movements. Answers to all questions concerned are normally based on the one hand on ancient source material, which, while qualitatively and/or quantitatively susceptible to evaluation, is not unproblematic (see below), and on the other hand on consideration of modern model life tables (however, available only for quite recent populations), the creation of more reliable high-mortality models, and comparative ethnological material. In doing so, the demographic history of ancient societies has made use of the discoveries of adjacent disciplines such as the historical demography of other epochs, archeology, anthropology,

sociobiology, cultural geography, and sub-disciplines of ancient history such as social, nutritional, economic, and medical history.

It has long been known that population size and population development have always had a significant influence on political, economic, cultural, and mental performances and developments:

the distribution of people between town and country was instrumental in the creation of collective identity, and may reflect the scale of division of labor and commerce; human mobility mediated information flows and culture change; mortality and morbidity were principal determinants of wellbeing, and determined fertility (and thus gender relations), investment in human capital, and economic productivity, and more generally shaped people's hopes and fears. The same is true of marriage customs and household structure. Classical civilization was the product of a thoroughly alien environment of frequent pregnancy and sudden death. Along with technological progress and scientific discovery, it was demographic change that separated the modern world from the more distant past. Archaic patterns of marriage, reproduction, and death seemed as natural and immutable then as they are exotic to us, and we cannot hope to approach ancient history without a solid understanding of what these conditions were and how they permeated life. This is the true challenge of demography. (Scheidel 2009: p. 134)

The Malthusian Law of Population in the meantime has been seen as flawed by its ignorance of factors such as technology, poverty, endemic disease, wars, and natural disasters, and modern theories have got as their point of departure the concept of demographic equilibrium, i.e. the idea that a population adapts itself to its biological, economic, and social-structural environment in such a way that mortality and fertility balance each other out over an extended period of time and at a level that depends on the population's resources, technology, and standards of living (Scheidel 2007: 50 ff). Therefore, "significant demographic change is mainly (to be) attributed to exogenous factors: climate, technology and endemic disease patterns, and in the short run to famines, particularly virulent epidemics and political factors like war" (Jursa 2010: p. 37).

The Sources and Their Relevance

The evaluation of the various types of source materials for demographic history faces fundamental problems that are also unique to the field of ancient history on the whole: gaps and coincidences in the body of tradition firstly pose the question of how representative available materials are. It must also be noted that the sources available to us were only rarely created for the primary purpose of demographic statistics, but far more often primarily for fiscal, judicial, military, and administrative purposes and to facilitate economic organization.

Table 2.1 Modern Estimates of the Population of the Achaemenid empire (McEvedy and Jones 1978: p. 125 (low estimates) and Aperghis 2004: pp. 56–58 (high estimates; cf. also Aperghis 2001: pp. 73–77). Scheidel 2007: p. 63 gives 20 000 000–25 000 000 inhabitants).

Area	Region population
<i>Low estimates</i>	
Egypt	c. 3 500 000
Near East (without Arabia)	c. 12 000 000
Central Asia and India	c. 1 500 000
Whole empire	c. 17 000 000
<i>High estimates</i>	
Mesopotamia	c. 5–6 000 000
Bactria/Sogdiana	c. 2 000 000
Margiana	c. 500 000
Central and eastern Persis	c. 500 000
Susiana and western Persis	c. 1 000 000
Northern Syria	c. 500 000
Cilicia	c. 2 000 000
Western and southern Asia Minor	c. 5 000 000
Syria/Palestine	c. 1 500 000–2 000 000
Egypt	c. 5–6 000 000
Eastern regions of the empire	At least c. 7 000 000
Whole empire	c. 30–35 000 000

Information on the demographic parameters of the Achaemenid Empire is rudimentary at best. What we have comes from a variety of sources, and the numbers they provide us with are highly controversial. As far as the total population of the Achaemenid Empire is concerned, a presentation of two different demographic tables reveals the problems of such calculations (Table 2.1).

The surviving numerical material must be examined both for its reliability and for its possible topos-related nature. This is especially true for Greco-Roman literary sources, which are often enough internally contradictory, stereotypical, or accidental, as well as dependent upon the narrative intentions and the purpose of the author. For example, Herodotus' (3.89) accounts of tributes to the Achaemenid king and of the size of the Persian army and fleet during the so-called Persian Wars (490–479 BCE) imply a very large population of the empire. More detailed analysis, however, proves that the Halicarnassian's figures are unreliable. Both his list of *nomoi* and the figures he gives for the tribute are not dependent on Persian sources (cf. Jacobs 1994: pp. 93–97; Ruffing 2009). His description of the size of the army is based on both Homer's epics and Hecataeus' ethnographical work, and the figures he lists for the number of soldiers and ships are based on patterns that express

nothing but relations of magnitude (Bichler 2000: pp. 323–327). Finally, by exaggerating the size of the Persian army throughout Greek history, authors such as Herodotus, Xenophon, and the historians of Alexander the Great magnify the Greeks' military achievements to make them seem exceptionally glorious. The authors of the fourth century BCE in particular succeeded in making the Persian opponent appear extremely daunting, but only because of the sheer size of its army (whose members had allegedly been coerced by the Great King to serve and fight) and not because of any bravery on the part of the soldiers or the tactical skills of their commanders.

Apart from those foreign texts, research on the demographic parameters of the Persian Empire has so far concentrated on two kinds of evidence: archeological surveys of settlement patterns (especially in the central Mesopotamian floodplain, but also in Judaea, etc.) and epigraphic documentation (mostly also from Babylonian archives). Only recently, and for reasons of reconstructing the economic history of Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid Mesopotamia, scholars have intensively dealt with those two kinds of source material. It would be helpful to have those surveys and those assessments of the textual documentation also for other parts of the Persian Empire, e.g. for Egypt (where the evidence should be similarly sufficient to provide some information on demographic parameters. But see Chapter 20 Egypt and Wasmuth 2017. For a demographic study on ancient Egypt on the whole, see Kraus 2004).

Archeological surveys from the beginning of the 1980s, which, however, focused on the whole period from the third millennium to Seleucid-Parthian times and, as already noted, were concentrated on the central alluvium (Adams 1981), were able to detect (on the basis of a calculation of settlement and population density) a significant population increase not later than the seventh century BCE. Thus, the values for the gross occupied site area rose from the Middle Babylonian (1150–700 BCE) to the Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid periods (until 300 BCE) from 616 ha to 1769 ha, the average site size from 4.6 ha to 6.88 ha. From the very obvious increase in large sites (settlements of 10-plus ha may be described as urban communities) from 36% to 51% of the area in this period, it has been concluded that “we are dealing with fairly abrupt, probably state-directed, policies of settlement formation in the case of the urban communities” (Adams 1981: p. 178). Table 2.2 underlines this development (for the original table, see Jursa 2010: p. 40).

As far as the irrigation systems are concerned, a marked shift, starting in the Neo-Babylonian period, has been postulated from locally regulated canal systems toward a centrally planned and maintained irrigation system with large canals and a markedly enlarged acreage (which, however, can only be recognized in reality for the Sasanian period). This hypothesis is said to be supported by evidence that points to high fees levied for the use of irrigation “water from state-owned canals” in the Achaemenid-controlled alluvium of

Table 2.2 Settlement development 2100 BCE – CE 200.

Site size	• Ur III-Isin-Larsa	• Old Babylonian	• Kassite	• Middle Babylonian	• Neo-Babylonian-Achaemenid	• Seleucid-Parthian
200.1+ ha	2	1	—	—	—	2
40.1–200 ha	11	7	4	1	5	4
20.1–40 ha	10	7	2	3	6	15
10.1–20 ha	16	10	7	2	19	34
4.1–10 ha	57	45	59	28	70	95
0.1–4 ha	143	108	165	100	157	265
(Total)	239 (2725)	178 (1791)	237 (1308)	134 (616)	257 (1769)	415 (2955)
Average site size (ha)	11.4	10.06	5.52	4.6	6.88	7.12

the fifth century BCE, and that in turn “seems to imply an awareness of possibilities of economic expansion that were tied to an ascending rate of state investment in the irrigation infrastructure” (Adams 1981: p. 246).

It has recently rightly been pointed out that each model of the Neo-Babylonian (and Achaemenid) economy (and population development) has to be based on those studies. At the same time, however, scholars have pinpointed the problems (partly already referred to by the author of the surveys himself) of the evidence and the methods of investigation employed: the dating uncertainties (of the pottery involved), the non-consideration of the area where the majority of the most important Neo-Babylonian urban centers were located (along the new western course of the Euphrates), and of the territories (in western and southeastern Babylonia) that represented the centers of the Chaldean tribes. The fivefold increase in the population between 700 BCE and 300 BCE postulated in the 1981 surveys is now regarded as too high, although it remains unclear by how much. Nevertheless, the following trends may be stated for the Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid periods: “demographic growth, an increasing degree of urbanisation, agrarian expansion and the role of the state” (Jursa 2010: p. 42). These are trends that, for the sixth century BCE, find their expression also in a significant increase in economic activity (which in turn is suggested by the extent of the written documentation) and the great Neo-Babylonian building projects (Jursa 2010: p. 42).

As for late Persian period Judah, both excavations and surveys (of settlements and administrative-oriented sites) have proven that this political entity must have been “a rural province with no more than half the number of settlements as the late Iron Age” (Lipschits and Tal 2007: p. 47. See also Lipschits 2003, 2005, *passim*). Conversely, no change can be observed between late Persian and early Hellenistic Yehud as far as settlement patterns, territory, and the organization of the administrative system are concerned.

Persian imperialism did not lead to the development of new megatowns (like Babylon) but rather to the adjustment to Persian needs of existing royal centers such as Babylon, Susa, Sardis, and Ecbatana. Still, the Achaemenids contributed significantly to the process of urbanization in the Ancient Near East by promoting satrapal capitals as regional centers (thereby following an Assyrian program) and by investing revenues in constructing new royal cities in their home province of Fars (Persepolis, Pasargadae, Matezzish). Since the “itinerant ruler” was a particular feature of Achaemenid kingship (Briant 1988; Tuplin 1998), Persian residences (note the kings’ self-portrayal as master builders, hunters, and gardeners) were marked by special architectural and landscaped constituents (palaces, fortifications, administrative buildings – open spaces for tents, gardens, and game parks [*paradeisoi*]).

Babylonian epigraphic documentation from Neo-Babylonian and Persian times (mostly from temple archives) is unable to match the value that the

several hundred census returns on papyrus from Roman Egypt (Bagnall and Frier 1994) of the first three centuries CE have for Greco-Roman demography (e.g. as a testimony for a supposed mean life expectancy at birth of between 20 and 30 years). However, it gives information on the active life span of craftsmen working for the temple (25 years), their cooperation with their fathers (for three to five years), and thus their age at marriage (on average below 19 years; in Roman Egypt: just above 25), thereby (roughly) corresponding with the Life Table Model West, Level 2 (Coale and Demeny 1983). Babylonian ration lists, mostly from the fourth century BCE, suggest a mean number of 3.4 adolescent children for average males (which would lead to a total of 7.73 births according to the Life Table quoted above). Other results of demographic research on Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid Babylonia are: life expectancy at birth for men – roughly 20.5 years (at the age of 20: until the age of 48; Roman Egypt: 25 and 50.7 respectively); age at marriage for females: about 14–15 years (for the demographic parameters of the Babylonian epigraphic evidence see Jursa 2010: pp. 37–39).

At first sight, the Persepolis Fortification Archive (for the Archive see Briant et al. 2008; Henkelman 2008: pp. 65–179) seems to be a quite meaningful demographic corpus. However, recent scholarly contributions have clearly proven the pitfalls and biases of the material in that respect (Henkelman 2008: pp. 79–85). For example, attempts to estimate the population of Fars or even only the number of workers involved in the “Persepolis economy” are highly problematic. First, we see only a part of the administrative-economic system, and we have no idea how large this part really was. Second, the numbers of the workers mentioned in the Elamite “Fortification Tablets” from Persepolis that have been published so far are also problematic; not even in combination with later historians’ praise of the fertility and population density of Persis do they enable us to estimate the size of the population of the core province of the empire. The groups of workers mentioned in the texts are not separate units; thus, certain (anonymous) workers might appear in different groups on different occasions. The manual workers and craftsmen employed there were actually members of a special labor force, recruited from all over the empire to serve the king in Fars. The proportion of men to women indicates no more than that some of these workers must have lived in family groups (against Aperghis’ view of an underfeeding of male workers (Aperghis 2000; see Tuplin 2008: 319f). The ratio of different generations does not match other ancient demographic patterns, and an assessment of living and work spaces minimizes the numerical data’s meaningfulness. But by looking at a special case (special rations for mothers) (Brosius 1996: pp. 171–178) and at Greek testimonies of the royal policy of reproduction (Hdt. 1.135f; Str. 15.3.17), it becomes obvious that Persian rulers were interested in the greatest possible number of potential soldiers, officials, and workers (Briant 2002: 277ff).

What we urgently need are reconstructions of human-climate-ecosystem interactions in different parts of the empire to be able to ask questions the answers to which might also lead to demographic insights.¹ For Fars, for example, those questions might be: What was the environmental context in which (i) the mobile agro-pastoralism and nomadism gave way to sedentary lifestyle, and (ii) the first highland urban centers established in the continental Middle East? How did human societies react to climate change and drought events? Were people aware of human-caused ecosystem change? How did human societies react to ecosystem change caused by anthropogenic disturbance? What was the spatial pattern of agro-pastoral practices and social organization within the capital area of the empire? What was the impact of major historical events on the dominant lifestyle during the historical period?

One of the most important branches of (ancient) demography is the study of population movements (Hahn 2012; Schunka and Olshausen 2010). However, the paucity of quantifiable evidence and the biases of some of the sources make demographic approaches and attempts of that kind again a difficult and dangerous undertaking. As for the Persian Empire, both the Greek and the indigenous evidence assign much relevance to Achaemenid “forced” or “involuntary migration” as a demographic factor. However, most of the classical reports on cases of deportations or population transfers have to be evaluated against their respective historical background (e.g. the stories of the alleged massacre of the Branchidae by Alexander III or the deportations following the falls of Miletus [494 BCE] and Eretria [490 BCE]), the literary or political traditions they are part of, and their authors’ intentions (cf. Olshausen 1997; Kehne 2009). Even the more reliable testimonies of the indigenous administrative evidence (cf. the famous case of the Caro-Egyptians in Borsippa [Waerzeggers 2006]; cf. also the *hatru* collectives in Babylonia, organized in terms of their duties, customers, or place of origin, and the abovementioned *kurtash* of the Persepolis texts) call for sober historical explanations and an evaluation in light of a long Ancient Near Eastern tradition of forced migration.² Besides, scholars have underlined that deportations should be distinguished from other, somewhat similar sanctions that may occur together with them, for example expropriation and massacre, exile of individuals and their families or adherents, enslavement or military conscription of conquered peoples, and forced sedentarization of nomads. However, there is little to suggest that further studies will be able to provide forced migration statistics (including the numbers of people from Greece and other countries who sought refuge with the Great King and his satraps).

The same holds true for an evaluation of transfers of army personnel, immigration, voluntary movements over long or short distances (settlers, colonists, etc.), seasonal migration, or migration from urban centers to rural areas or

vice versa. The relative peace and safety on Persian-controlled routes and waterways did surely facilitate the voluntary movements of people eager to change places (traders, settlers, etc.). The royal distribution of land and property to Iranian and non-Iranian officials and officers in newly acquired territories and the service of Achaemenid garrison troops in places far away from their homes also influenced demographic conditions. After all, both of these migratory measures led to the development of an Iranian cultural “diaspora,” especially in Hellenistic and Roman Asia Minor (for Achaemenid Anatolia and its *Nachleben* see Dusinberre 2013).

NOTES

- 1 A proposed Franco-German project aims at reconstructing human-climate-ecosystem interactions in the Persepolis Basin (southwest Iran) during the Holocene by using different archive types: lake sediment cores, peat cores, soils, and soil sediments, as well as written sources (especially for the time interval of ca. 3000–1500 BP) and archeological plant and animal remains complemented by available geochemical records. Apart from its main objectives (an evaluation of the past and present water resources in the Persepolis Basin and their availability to past human societies, and an assessment of human impacts on natural ecosystems; the establishment of human-independent, high-resolution, hydroclimatic records using biological proxies correlated with available geochemical records), the final goal of the project is to compare and cross-check the acquired palaeo-environmental datasets with already available knowledge from the Persepolis Basin to give a synthetic account of the climate–human interactions during the Holocene.
- 2 The Kiel dissertation by C. Matarese (Matarese, in press) (see Chapter 61 Migration and Deportation) will try to remedy the current lack of a comprehensive study of Achaemenid deportations.

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FURTHER READING

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CHAPTER 3

Peoples and Languages

Jan Tavernier

Introduction: The Territory of the Achaemenid Empire

At its largest extent the Achaemenid Empire comprised a gigantic territory, extending from Thrace and northern Greece in the west to India in the east, and from Egypt in the south to Afghanistan and Central Asia in the north. This huge territory was in the first place brought together by the founder of the empire, Cyrus II (c. 559–529 BCE), who added Media (central Iran), Asia Minor, the eastern Iranian regions, Mesopotamia, and the Levant to his small kingdom of Anshan. Despite his short reign, Cyrus' son and successor, Cambyses II (529–522 BCE), was able to conquer Egypt, and his successor, Darius I (521–486 BCE), took some areas in the north (Scythia), Thrace, and the lower Indus valley (Figure 3.1).

The Achaemenids were proud of the geographical hugeness of their realm, as can be seen in the royal inscriptions DPh and DH (Darius I):

This (is) the kingdom which I hold, from the Saka who are beyond Sogdiana, from there as far as Kush, from the Indus as far as Sardis, which Ahuramazda, the greatest among gods, bestowed upon me.

This consciousness is also present in the words of Cyrus the Younger, transmitted by Xenophon (*Anab.* 1.7.6). By these words Cyrus identifies the Achaemenid Empire with the inhabited world:

A Companion to the Achaemenid Persian Empire, Volume I, First Edition.

Edited by Bruno Jacobs and Robert Rollinger.

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Figure 3.1 Map of the Achaemenid Empire. Source: Reproduced by permission of Jan Tavernier.

My father's realm extends toward the south to a region where men cannot dwell by reason of the heat, and to the north to a region where they cannot dwell by reason of the cold.

Finally, the hugeness of the Achaemenid Empire also impressed some Greek authors, such as Xenophon (*Cyrop.* 1.1.3), who writes that

Cyrus, a Persian, acquired very many people, very many cities and very many nations.

The Internal Ethnic Diversity of the Achaemenid Empire

In the Achaemenid Royal Ideology

The internal diversity too of the realm was frequently referred to in the Achaemenid inscriptions. It is expressed literally (in combination with the geographical extent) in DPg, a Babylonian inscription from Persepolis:

A great (god is) Ahuramazda, who ..., and bestowed on Darius the king king-ship over this wide earth, in which there are many lands: Persia, Media and the other lands of other tongues, of mountains and plains, from this side of the sea to that side of the sea, from this side of the desert to that side of the desert.

Also in other inscriptions, various expressions illustrate the consciousness of the Achaemenid kings with regard to the diversity and extent of their kingdom:

- 1) *Paruzana*- “containing many (kinds) of men”: This lexeme is attested in the royal title, in the formula *xšāyaθiya dahyunām paruzanānām* “king of countries containing many kinds of men” (DE 15–16, XE 15–16, A¹Pa 11–12). It is two times written *paruvzanānām* (XPb 15–16, XPd 11) and five times, in texts from Xerxes, it is split in two: *paruv zanānām* (XPa 8, XPc 7, XPf 11, XPh 9, XV 12).
- 2) *Vispazana*- “containing all (kinds) of men”: Also attested in the same royal formula *xšāyaθiya dahyunām vispazanānām* “king of countries containing all kinds of men” (DNa 10–11, DSe 9, DZc 5). It seems that *paruzana*- gradually replaced *vispazana*- as expression *par excellence* for the ethnic diversity of the Achaemenid Empire.
- 3) *Visadabhyu*- “of all countries”: name of a gate in Persepolis (XPa 12).

These words were firmly established in the Achaemenid royal ideology and were that specific that the Elamite (and once a Babylonian) versions simply transcribed the Old Persian words into their own languages:

- 1) *Paruzana*- (Tavernier 2007a: p. 35 no. 1.4.2.3): El. bar-ru-za-na-° and ba-ru-za-na-°. Note that the Elamites also used a genuine Elamite word to translate this expression: *iršekki* (XPc 11–12).
- 2) *Visadana*- (Tavernier 2007a: p. 78 no. 2.4.2.1): El. mi-iš-šá-da-na-°. Old Persian variant of the “Median” form *vispazana*-.
- 3) *Vispadana*- (Tavernier 2007a: p. 78 no. 2.4.2.2): El. mi-iš-ba-da-na-°. Old Persian–Median *Mischform*.
- 4) *Vispazana*- (Tavernier 2007a: p. 78 no. 1.4.2.5): Attested in the Elamite version of DPa (mi-iš-ba-za-na), although it does not appear in the original Old Persian version.
- 5) *Visadabhyu*- (Tavernier 2007a: p. 37 no. 1.4.8.4): Attested in the Elamite version of XPa (mi-iš-šá-da-a-hu-iš).
- 6) *Visadabhyu*- (Tavernier 2007a: p. 80 no. 2.4.8.1): Attested in the Babylonian version of XPa (ú-’-is-pi-da-a-’-i).

The Babylonians used more of their own lexicon to translate the Old Persian expressions: *Paruzana*- became *ša naphar lišānu* “of all tongues” (XPa 7, XPc 10, XPd 11, XPh 6; XV 12) or *ša naphar lišānata* (DE 15–16). *Vispazana*- was translated by the same expression in DNa 5 and DSe 6.

Interestingly, *vispazana*- and its variants are also attested in documentary texts from Persepolis (Fortification and Treasury Texts) but in a much more mundane way than in the inscriptions. The adjective applies to horses (NN 0726), fowls (NN 574, 790, 1664, 1674; PF 1747–1749), and cereals (PF 1223). In PT 79 the context is less clear and the adjective could refer to laborers or to a part of a building.

Furthermore, the multiethnic character of the Achaemenid Empire also appears on two other levels in the Achaemenid royal inscriptions (Briant 1996: pp. 184–186): the satrapy lists and the “Foundation Chart” of Susa.

Five inscriptions (DB, DPe, DSe, DNa, XPh) have a list of lands subject to the Achaemenid king. The lands mentioned are the following:

DB	DPe	DSe	DNa	XPh
Persia	Elam	Media	Media	Media
Elam	Media	Elam	Elam	Elam
Babylonia	Babylonia	Parthia	Parthia	Arachosia
Assyria	Arabia	Aria	Aria	Armenia
Arabia	Assyria	Bactria	Bactria	Drangiana
Egypt	Egypt	Sogdiana	Sogdiana	Parthia
Sea-Land	Armenia	Chorasmia	Chorasmia	Aria
Lydia	Cappadocia	Drangiana	Drangiana	Bactria
Ionia	Lydia	Arachosia	Arachosia	Sogdiana
Media	Inland Ionians	Sattagydia	Sattagydia	Chorasmia
Armenia	Ionians by the sea	Maka	Gandhara	Babylonia
Cappadocia	Lands across the sea	Gandhara	India	Assyria
Parthia	Sagartia	India	<i>hauma-drinking</i> Saca	Sattagydia
Drangiana	Parthia	<i>hauma-drinking</i> Saca	Pointed Hat Saca	Lydia
Aria	Drangiana	Pointed Hat Saca	Babylonia	Egypt
Chorasmia	Aria	Babylonia	Assyria	Ionians by the sea
Bactria	Bactria	Assyria	Arabia	Ionians across the sea
Sogdiana	Sogdiana	Arabia	Egypt	Makians
Gandhara	Chorasmia	Egypt	Armenia	Arabia
Saca	Sattagydia	Armenia	Cappadocia	Gandhara
Sattagydia	Arachosia	Cappadocia	Lydia	India
Arachosia	India	Lydia	Ionia	Cappadocia
Maka	Gandhara	Ionians by the sea	Saca across the sea	Dahians
	Saca	Saca across the sea	Skudrians	<i>hauma-drinking</i> Saca
	Maka	Skudrians	<i>petasos-wearing</i> Ionians	Pointed Hat Saca
		Ionians across the sea	Libyans	Skudrians
		Caria	Nubians	Akaufaciyaans
			Maka	Libyans
			Carians	Carians
				Nubia
Total: 23	25	27	29	30

The above lists clearly illustrate the multiethnicity of the Achaemenid Empire.

Next to these lists of subject lands, there is the foundation chart of Susa (DSf). This text is a record of the building of a palace in the royal capital Susa. Darius mentions various regions from where the building material came and several people who supplied artisans engaged in the processing of these materials.

Regions and materials:

Land/people	Resource	Land/people	Resource
Arachosia	Ivory	Ionia	Wall ornamentation
Bactria	Gold	Lebanon	Cedar wood
Carmania	<i>yakā</i> -timber	Lydia	Gold
Chorasmia	Turquois	Nubia	Ivory
Egypt	Silver	India	Ivory
Egypt	Ebony	Sogdiana	Lapis lazuli
Elam (Abiraduš)	Stone columns	Sogdiana	Carnelian
Gandāra	<i>yakā</i> -timber		

Activities of peoples:

People	Activity
Assyrians	Transporting the cedar wood from Lebanon to Babylon
Babylonians	Molding sun-dried bricks
Carians	Transporting the cedar wood from Babylon to Susa
Egyptians	Goldsmiths
Egyptians	Woodworking
Egyptians	Wall adorning
Ionians	Transporting the cedar wood from Babylon to Susa
Ionians	Stone-cutting
Lydians	Stone-cutting
Lydians	Woodworking
Medes	Goldsmiths
Medes	Wall adorning

DSf is complemented by two other documents, equally recording the building of the palace in Susa. DSz is a much damaged copy of DSf. The other inscription, DSaa, exclusively recorded in Babylonian, does not connect specific materials with countries. After enumerating the various materials used for the palace (11–17), it simply states:

These are the lands that have brought the materials for the decoration of this palace: Persia, Media, Elam, Babylonia, Assyria, Arabia, Egypt, the Sea Lands, Lydia, Ionia, Armenia, Cappadocia, Parthia, Drangiana, Aria, Chorasmia, Bactria, Sogdiana, Gandāra, Cimmeria, Sattagydia, Arachosia, Maka (Qadê).

Clearly, these building inscriptions fit into the royal ideology concerning the *vispazana*-ness of the empire. Thanks to the unity and collaboration of all lands, guided by the master hand of the king himself, this magnificent palace has been built. The inscriptions stress the unity as well as the diversity of the Achaemenid Empire. Conspicuously, but not surprisingly, nearly all building activities are realized by two lands/peoples: stone-cutting is the job of the Ionians and Lydians, whereas woodworking is taken care of by Egyptians and Lydians, etc. This is in contrast to the Persepolis Fortification Archive (cf. *infra*), where there are but few instances of two ethnonyms appearing together in a single text (Henkelman and Stolper 2009: pp. 278–279). This underlines the ideological character of the inscriptions, which stress the solidarity and the eagerness, shared by all people governed by the Achaemenid king, to collaborate in order to realize the king's great projects.

Finally, the Achaemenid iconography also gives us some information on the royal consciousness concerning the multitude of peoples living in the empire. Throne bearers are depicted in Persepolis and Naqš-e Rostam. They are neatly distinguished with regard to their external appearance and are accompanied by captions describing them. Note that here the peoples' names are used rather than the lands' names: Persian, Median, Elamite, Parthian, Arian, Bactrian, Sogdian, Chorasmian, Drangianian, Arachosian, Sattagyidian, Gandharian, Indian, *hauma*-drinking Saca, Pointed Hat Saca, Babylonian, Assyrian, Arab, Egyptian, Armenian, Cappadocian, Lydian, Ionian, Saca across the sea, Thracian, *petasos*-wearing Ionian, Libyan, Nubian, Macian, Carian.

A statue of Darius (DSab), but sculpted in Egypt, depicts 24 persons, each belonging to a different people or land: Persia, Media, Elam, Aria, Parthia, Bactria, Sogdiana, Arachosia, Drangiana, Sattagydia, Chorasmia, Saca of Marsh and Saca of Plain, Babylonia, Armenia, Lydia, Cappadocia, Skudra, Assyria, Hagar (Arabia), Egypt, Libya, Nubia, Maka, India.

The Persepolis reliefs also show representatives of countries bringing their tribute: Medes, Elamites, Armenians, Arians, Babylonians, Lydians, Arachosians, Assyrians, Cappadocians, Egyptians, Saca (three types), Ionians, Bactrians, Gandharians, Parthians, Sagartians, Indians, Arabians, Drangians, Nubians.

If all this is taken together, one can make up a list of people mentioned by the Achaemenid kings as subject people. No less than 36 lands or people appear in these texts: Persia, Elam, Media, Sagartia, Akaufaciya, Parthia, Aria, Bactria, Sogdiana, Chorasmia, Drangiana, Arachosia, Sattagydia, Gandhara, India, *hauma*-drinking Saca, Pointed Hat Saca (these two peoples are plainly called Saca in the eldest inscriptions DB and DPe), Babylonia, Assyria, Arabia, Egypt, Libya, Nubia, Armenia, Cappadocia, Lydia, Skudra, Saca across the sea, Caria, inland Ionians, Ionians by the sea, Ionians across the sea, *petasos*-wearing Ionians (the Ionians are brought together under the header Ionia in DB), Lands across the sea, Dahia, Maka.

The rather large number of textual and iconographical royal sources listing the subject lands corroborates the importance for the Achaemenid kings to act in such a way. In other words, the enumerating of these lands is firmly established in the royal mind. In fact, it is one of the central axes of the royal Achaemenid ideology.

Peoples and Languages in Elamite, Babylonian, and Greek Texts

Elamite Texts

Large groups of ethnically defined workmen also appear in documentary texts from the Achaemenid period, especially in the Persepolis Fortification and Treasury Texts, where they are active in the Persepolis economy (cf. Henkelman and Stolper 2009 on the Skudrians; Rollinger and Henkelman 2009 on the Ionians; Tavernier 2015 on the Lycians; Uchitel 1989 and 1991 in general; Wasmuth 2009 on the Egyptians).

People attested in Persepolis, which must have been a really multicultural residential city, are Ākaufacians, Arabs, Arachosians, Arbelans, Areians, Armenians, Assyrians (Syrians), Babylonians, Bactrians, Cappadocians, Carians, Carmanians, Drangianians, Egyptians, Gandharians, Hattians (north Syrians), Hyrcanians, Indians, Ionians, Lycians, Lydians, Macians, Parikanians, Parthians, Sagartians, Skudrians, and Sogdians (Henkelman and Stolper 2009: pp. 300–306).

Remarkably, Persians, Medes, and Elamites are absent or nearly absent from the written documents, although their role in the Persepolis economy is beyond doubt (as already indicated by the Old Persian, Median, and Elamite names). This absence or near-absence may be explained by the fact that their ethnicity did apparently not matter for the Persepolis administrators (Henkelman and Stolper 2009: pp. 275–278).

Babylonian Texts

Babylonian texts dated to the Achaemenid period too sometimes mention foreign groups or individuals (Joannès 2009: pp. 224–227) and the fact that they are rather private texts than texts belonging to the public administration makes the context in which these groups appear different from the Persepolis context. An interesting dossier is that of the Caro-Egyptian (i.e. Carians coming from Egypt) soldiers stationed in Borsippa (Waerzeggers 2006; Heller 2010: pp. 341–344). This dossier illustrates one of the systems by which the Achaemenid state channeled the influx of foreign people in Babylonia: Borsippean citizens had to provide rations for the Caro-Egyptians. Other systems are (i) war prisoners that were sold into slavery or donated to a temple

and (ii) the military land-grant system, which functions according to the “land-for-service” principle and which is fairly well attested in the late fifth-century Murašû Archive. One text also illustrates this system for Jews (Waerzeggers 2006: p. 68). In addition, the Murašû Archive contains various names of so-called *ḫaṭrus*, which were named after an ethnic group: Arabs, Armenians, Carians, Cimmerians, Indians, Lydians, Phrygians, and Tyrians (Stolper 1985: pp. 72–79). An Egyptian community at Susa is well-attested in the Babylonian documentation (Joannès 1984).

From Babylonian texts can also be derived that Babylonian workers were active in the construction of a palace at Taokè (modern Borazjan, in the Bushehr region; Tolini 2008). The Elamite texts corroborate this, in naming groups of Egyptians, Skudrians, Cappadocians, and Lydians that were directed to the same place (Henkelman and Stolper 2009: pp. 279–280).

It should be kept in mind, however, that the Achaemenid Empire was not unique in using workforces not belonging to the same ethnicity of the ruling class for its own purposes. The Neo-Assyrian Empire is notoriously famous for its deportations of workmen from conquered areas to Assyria proper. In the same way the Neo-Babylonian Empire did precisely the same (just to mention the Babylonian Captivity) and at the royal court many non-Babylonian people are attested (Heller 2010: p. 336; Jursa 2010: pp. 72–73). The difference between the earlier empires and the Achaemenid Empire, however, is that in the latter the ethnically-defined groups play a role in the royal ideology whereas in Mesopotamia they are kept away from this ideology.

Greek Texts

The many Greek classical sources informing us on the history of the Achaemenid Empire mention numerous people, but the most famous passage must be the one in which Herodotus lists the 20 provinces installed by Darius I (*Hist.*, III 90–97; cf. Jacobs 2003; Ruffing 2009). The provinces are:

- 1) Ionians, Magnesians in Asia, Aeolians, Carians, Lycians, Milyans, and Pamphylians.
- 2) Mysians, Lydians, Lasionians, Cabalians, and Hytennians.
- 3) Hellespontines, Phrygians, Thracians in Asia, Paphlagonians, Mariandynians, and Syrians.
- 4) Cilicians.
- 5) The city of Posideium up to Egypt (except the Arabs), including Phoenicia, Palestina, and Cyprus.
- 6) Egypt, Libya, Cyrene, Barca.
- 7) The Sattagydiens, Gandharians, Dadicae, and Aparytai.
- 8) The Susians and the other lands of the Cissians.
- 9) Babylon and Assyria.

- 10) The Ecbatanians, the rest of Media, Paricanians, and Orthocorybantes.
- 11) The Caspians, Pausicae, Pantimathi, and Daritae.
- 12) The Bactrians as far as the Aegli.
- 13) The Pactyic region, the Armenians, and the adjacent regions as far as the Black Sea.
- 14) The Sagartians, Sarangians, Thamanians, Utians, and Mycians.
- 15) The Saca and Caspians.
- 16) Parthians, Chorasmians, Sogdians, and Arcians.
- 17) Paricanians and the Ethiopians of Asia.
- 18) The Matieni, Saspies, and Alarodians.
- 19) The Moschi, Tibareni, Macrones, Mossynoeci, and Mares.
- 20) The Indians.

These are the people paying tribute. Other people, only giving presents to the Persian king, are the Arabs, the Ethiopians, and the Colchians. The list is certainly not exhaustive. In the work of the same author, other people occur as well, e.g. in Asia Minor (1.170–180): Caunians, Calyndians, and Pedasians.

Also Xenophon (*Cyrop.* 1.1.4) gives a list of people subdued by Cyrus II: Medes, Hyrcanians, Surians, Assyrians, Arabians, Cappadocians, Phrygians, Lydians, Carians, Phoenicians, Babylonians, Bactrians, Indians, Cilicians, Sacians, Paphlagonians, Magadidians, Greeks in Asia, Cyprians, Egyptians, “and many other nations, whose names one cannot even say.” It should be noted, however, that the conquests of Xenophon’s Cyrus are not the same as those of the historical Cyrus (Ambler 2001: p. 287), e.g. Egypt was only conquered by his son Cambyses.

The Languages of the Achaemenid Empire: An Overview

Xenophon has it that Cyrus “ruled these nations even though they did not speak the same language as either he himself or one another.” Diodorus tells his readers that before the battle of Gaugamela the Achaemenid king “was most concerned lest some confusion should arise in the battle from the numerous people assembled that differed in speech” (Diodorus Siculus 17.53.4). In his Bīsitūn inscription, Darius I commands the diffusion of his text in his subordinates’ languages: “Afterwards this inscription I sent off everywhere among the provinces. The people unitedly worked upon it” (iv 91–92). Finally, in Esther 3.12 one may read that an order was to be sent “to every province in its own script and every people in its own language.”

These are only four examples of the multilingual character of the Achaemenid Empire, in which languages of various families were spoken. East Iran has its own languages and dialects (e.g. Arachosian, Bactrian, Sogdian), which was

already noticed by Strabo (*Geogr.*, 15.2.8). In the north, northern Iranian languages were spoken, whereas Elamite, Persian, and Median controlled southwest and central Iran. In Egypt, Mesopotamia, the Levant, and Anatolia people continued to speak their own languages: Egyptian, Babylonian, Aramaic, Phrygian, Anatolian languages (Lycian, Lydian), Greek, etc. (see Chapter 54 The Interplay of Languages and Communication).

Language and Administration in the Achaemenid Empire

After their glorious military expeditions which resulted in the creation of a huge territorial empire (Figure 3.1), the Achaemenid kings faced a political unit with lots of different ethnic groups as well as languages. It was a daunting task to keep such a large territory together. The Achaemenid administration especially had to deal with various administrative systems in different languages. The big challenge here was to communicate commands and directives to the various satrapies and to make these orders comprehensible for the non-Persian-speaking inhabitants of these satrapies, even more so knowing that the knowledge of Old Persian, the king's and the Persian elites' vernacular, was not widespread in the empire (Briant 1996: p. 525).

In fact, in order to solve these linguistic problems the Achaemenids conducted an active language policy (Tavernier 2008; 2017; 2018; forthcoming). The main basis for the reconstruction of this policy is the many administrative formulas at the end of, e.g., letter-orders. Such formulas are attested in Aramaic texts (from Egypt as well as from Bactria), Egyptian (demotic) texts, and Elamite texts. They reveal a coherent system, imposed by the Achaemenid kings and used throughout the existence of their empire, both geographically and chronologically. The formulas are attested from the reign of Darius I (521–486 BCE) to that of Artaxerxes III (358–338 BCE) in texts from Egypt (Arsames Correspondence [Aramaic], Pherendates Correspondence [Egyptian]), Persia proper (Persepolis Fortification and Treasury Archives [Elamite]), and Bactria (Akhvamazda Correspondence [Aramaic]).

The administrative notes are attested only on letters from the satrap or from his administration; letters to satraps do not have these formulas. Unfortunately, this implies that outside of the satrapal administration the Achaemenids' dealing with multilingualism cannot be reconstructed. In addition, the evidence for this system does not cover the whole Achaemenid territory, as it is not attested in Anatolia, although various Aramaic inscriptions were found there.

The formulas are:

Language	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Aramaic	1) PN ₁ knows this command 2) PN ₁ is the master of the command	PN ₂ is the <i>sepīru</i>	PN ₃ wrote
Egyptian	PN ₁ knows this command	PN ₂ is he who wrote this letter	PN ₃ wrote
Elamite	1) PN ₁ knew about this 2) PN ₁ delivered the command	PN ₃ received the draft from PN ₂	PN ₃ wrote

From these formulas a reconstruction model of how royal or satrapal commands were created can be drawn up:

- 1) A high official (e.g. satrap) passes a (royal) command in Old Iranian to one of his officials. This person (PN₁) is the one who knows the command.
- 2) The official transmits the command to the interpreter (PN₂) in Old Iranian. This is equivalent to formula P.
- 3) The interpreter notes it down in Aramaic.
- 4) If necessary, the interpreter also makes a translation into Egyptian or Elamite.
- 5) He passes this translation to an indigenous scribe (PN₃).
- 6) This scribe makes an additional copy, the copy of which is preserved.

The interpreters-scribes, called *teppir* in Elamite, *spr* in Aramaic, and *sepīru* in Akkadian, occupied a considerable position in the Achaemenid administration. This is corroborated by the high rations they received according to the Persepolis Fortification Tablets (Tavernier 2007b: p. 63). In fact, interpreters (ἑρμηνεύς) occur frequently in the Greek sources (e.g. Xen., *Anab.*, 1.2.17 and 8.12).

This also implies that Aramaic, although it did not supplant the local languages which remained in use throughout the Achaemenid period (Briant 1996: p. 524), was imposed on the empire as an administrative language. It lay as a veil on the whole territory of the Achaemenid Empire. In this capacity, Aramaic was the linguistic binder of the empire, the language used throughout its territory, between the Old Persian level and the local administrative level. The following table makes this clear:

Administration level	Language
King, satraps	Old Persian
Administration: top level	Aramaic
Administration: local level	Egyptian, Elamite, etc.

Through this system, the Achaemenids managed to keep their realm together and to put up an efficient state administration. Yet, further studies will hopefully deepen our knowledge of the Achaemenid language policy.

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CHAPTER 4

Languages and Script

Adriano V. Rossi

The ethnic and linguistic diversity of the Achaemenid *oikumene* impressed the external observers (the Bible, classic writers). The typical Achaemenid approach to this diversity was condensed in the Old Persian (OP) terms *vispazana-/paruzana-*, “(with) all/many kinds (of people)” translated into Babylonian as *ša naphar lišānu gabbi*, “of all nationalities (?)”.

Epigraphy documents the usage of different languages in the Achaemenid administration. Aramaic was, or was becoming, a sort of *vehicular language* (not *official*, Folmer 1995: p. 13), while local languages kept on being used in private texts, in the local administrations, and in some royal proclamations.

Despite the diffusion of so many languages, only three were used for the monumental records: OP, Elamite, and Babylonian. Different degrees of bilingualism and/or diglossia have been hypothesized.

The Achaemenid inscriptions are presumed to have been planned in OP, an Indo-European (IE) language close to Avestan; the people associated with that language were the Achaemenids, who we conceive as an ethnic élite, settled in Fārs at an undetermined period (traditionally fixed at the end of the second millennium BCE, even if it could be antedated at least at the first half of that millennium). Although the basis for OP must lie in a southwestern Iranian dialect, **the specific variety attested in the inscriptions is likely to correspond to a literary, artificial form of it.**

It is commonly assumed that the specific cuneiform writing adapted to the language, the “OP script,” has not been used before Darius: the scribes of Cyrus seem to have used Babylonian, even if the extent of the documentation

attributable to Cyrus is much reduced. Nonetheless, trilingual inscriptions (OP, Elamite, and Babylonian) are attested at palaces built by Cyrus at Pasargadae. Many scholars claim that the OP version was probably added later. Nylander (1967), who investigated the matter, questions that all OP inscriptions bearing Cyrus' name were forgeries by order of Darius (also Schmitt 2007: pp. 28–31), and believes that while Cyrus wrote the original texts in Elamite and Babylonian, Darius added their OP versions. Vallat (2011: pp. 277–279) supports their authenticity for paleographical reasons.

Even more complicated problems are posed by two gold laminae bearing inscriptions of Darius' great-grandfather Ariaramnes and his grandfather Arsames, which may or may not be authentic.

It is uncertain whether the OP script was really invented during Darius' reign, as became fashionable to claim after Weissbach's siding (1911: pp. lx–lxi; Weissbach changed his mind before 1930, cf. Schaefer 1930: p. 293). As Diakonoff (1970) argued, the OP script may have been devised to write Median, or any other Iranian language. For those scholars who do not want to subscribe to Diakonoff's views, the inconsistencies of the OP script can be explained on the basis of a principle of economy: only the signs that were necessary to avoid ambiguity would have been created.

The problem of the language(s) and the script(s) used in everyday life on the plateau remains open. One could assume, with Grantovskij (1998: p. 342), that “Iranian languages had been subject to interdialectal merging long before the rise of Media;” Lecoq has pointed at the language of the inscriptions as a literary language (1974: pp. 56–58, 1997: p. 50), an interdialectal koiné (1974: p. 61). Kellens (2002: p. 455) suggests an interpretation in terms of *sabir*/lingua franca, Henkelman (2011: p. 615 fn. 105) of diglossia.

A document which could hint at the relation between royal proclamations and their dissemination is a passage in the Bisotun inscription, in which Darius says something about the monument/inscription itself, but a question about the interpretation of this passage (= OP § 70, Elam. Inscription L) has been going on for more than 100 years, and there is no consensus to date (research report: Rossi 2020). The Aramaic version of the inscription found at Elephantine (Folmer 1995: pp. 741–742) hints at an important role of this language, but surely not as pervasive as suggested by Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1999) because of the scanty Aramaic evidence on the plateau.

Other ancient Iranian languages could be ascribed to the Achaemenid world. “Median” is a cover term used for the minimal Old Iranian remnants in the OP inscriptions (names, specific vocabulary items, etc.) and other sources (especially Elamite tablets), whose phonology departs from that which is believed to be “typical OP.” “Median” does therefore not refer to a specific language (theoretically a northwestern Iranian language, in view of its location) but is merely a conventional label (Rossi 1981, 2017b). Since the 1980s the

Median component in Late Iron Age Iran has been strongly reduced, and the nerve-racking search for a Median language and script as a major feature connoting the “Median State” collapsed (Schmitt 2003; Rossi 2010, 2017b). Even less can be said about the languages of the nomadic tribes known as Scythians/Saka (Mayrhofer 2006).

Moreover, as before the Achaemenids emerged the Iranian plateau had been inhabited by peoples who spoke Elamite (language with no relatives, attested in cuneiform inscriptions from the twenty-third century BCE), there is no surprise that an important administrative language was Elamite in its Achaemenid variant. Gershevitch (1979) thought that Achaemenid Elamite was OP written ideographically, while OP versions were mere duplications for display purposes, but he never revealed the details of this “alloglottography” theory (Henkelman 2011: pp. 614–622) and therefore was strongly criticized by Elamitologists (in favor: Rubio 2006; research report: Rossi 2006).

Thirty thousand Elamite tablets and fragments were found at the Fortification wall on the Persepolis Terrace; 750 tablets and fragments in the “Treasury” area. Hundreds of tablets present Aramaic ink epigraphs; 163 Aramaic inscriptions on mortars, pestles, etc. which were found in the same “Treasury” area probably record the manufacture and their payment to treasurers in Arachosia (not their “ritual” use as believed by its editor Bowman).

According to Shaked (2003), it is reasonable to assume that knowledge of Aramaic, among speakers of Iranian, was confined to the scribes, who were conversant with OP in oral communication and with Aramaic in its written form. The earliest scribes could have been native speakers of Aramaic, who learned Persian; subsequently they may have been native speakers of Persian, who learned Aramaic as a written language.

At Persepolis, similar processes may have been active for Elamite. The officials who required the services of scribes probably preferred people who spoke their own language – Persian – with lesser attention to their fluency in Elamite.

The discovery of an isolated example of OP on a Persepolis administrative tablet (Stolper and Tavernier 2007) could change the accepted view of the functional differentiation between OP, Elamite, and Aramaic. This document actually contravenes stated expectations: at least one scribe wrote Persian language in Persian script and expected someone else to know how to read it. Gershevitch (1979: p. 143, cf. his “alloglottography” above) had insisted that there was not “the slightest chance for Old Persian written in Old Persian script ... to have ever been in general use” (with different presumptions also Schmitt came to similar conclusions: “das Altpersische [hat] für die eigentliche Verwaltung [...] keine Rolle gespielt,” 1993: p. 81).

Only hypotheses can be advanced to explain the existence of this tablet, but it is possibly the sole evidence of a larger group of documents, and therefore of more widespread recording in OP.

Evidence of multilingualism in the Achaemenid administration is provided not only by the interplay between Elamite and Aramaic language usage on the Persepolis tablets but also in the Aramaic name inscriptions on seals owned by personages whose primary language ought to have been different from Aramaic (Garrison and Root 2001: pp. 7–9).

All mentioned evidence reinforces the assumption that the Persepolis archive, like many others of the earlier Near East, represents the simultaneous use of several languages and asymmetric interference among them.

The relation between Elamite and Aramaic in the scribal practice of the Fortification texts has been discussed by Tavernier (2008); see also Rossi (2017).

The scribes using the Aramaic script, called *teppi*- in Elamite, are almost universally believed to write on parchment, but we do not have any Aramaic text ‘on parchment’ relatable to the tablets which contain this indication.

Note that the *teppi*-s whose names are preserved have Iranian names.

From the study of the different redaction patterns appearing in the Elamite tablets, Tavernier reconstructs three steps: (i) a Persian officer dictates an order in OP to employee A; (ii) employee A delivers the order to employee B, who makes an Aramaic translation (*tumme*) and gives it to employee C; (iii) employee C writes an Elamite copy (central administration), or a Demotic, etc. copy (peripheral administrations), of the *tumme* (see Chapter 3 Peoples and Languages).

The reconstruction is complex and entails many crucial assumptions impossible to discuss here (different interpretation: Vallat 1997); even Tavernier points out that only for a minority of the tablets this process could be envisaged, while according to the common procedure most likely the translation was directly from OP into Elamite.

Summing up, while on many details our vision of the Achaemenid multilingualism is much more advanced than in previous generations of scholars, the overall framework still eludes us.

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CHAPTER 5

Onomastics

Rüdiger Schmitt

For the Achaemenid Empire evidence of personal names is much more extensive than that of geographical names (toponyms, names of countries [together with the ethnonyms derived from them], river names, and oronyms). As they have much greater importance for the historian looking at the empire, too, they are given priority in the present chapter.

Personal Names: Evidence

Evidence of personal names belonging to the Achaemenid period is considerable, even if in the Old Persian royal inscriptions themselves fewer than 50 names are attested (cf. Mayrhofer 1979). Among them a first large group are the names of the early kings (*Haxāmaniš*, *Cišpiš*, *Ariyāramna*, *Kuruš*, *Kambūjiya*), some of which being rather unclear, then the etymologically transparent throne-names (cf. below) of Darius and his successors (*Dārayavauš*, *Xšaya-ṛšan*-, *Ṛta-xšaça*-) and names of other Achaemenids (*Ṛšāma*, *Vištāspa*, *Bṛdiya*). Other lots are the names of Darius' fellow conspirators and their fathers, of members of the court, of Darius' generals and satraps, and finally the names of the disloyal pretenders to the throne rebelling against Darius, part of them being non-Iranian in origin.

Since the Achaemenids ruled a multinational and multilingual empire covering for a while almost the entire Near East from the Aegean Sea to the Indus river and including Egypt, Old Iranian personal names are attested in a lot of

sources written in the numerous languages (and writing systems) of the various peoples of the empire and of those in connection with it. The most important, but not the only branches of this so-called collateral tradition of Old Iranian anthroponyms, are the Elamite, Babylonian, Aramaic, and (Hieroglyphic and Demotic) Egyptian sources. From outside the empire it is in particular the Greek evidence that is found in the contemporary literature, even if the onomastic credibility of the individual authors may differ considerably (as we see, e.g., from the comparison of the names of the fellow conspirators as attested by Herodotus and Ctesias respectively with those found in Darius' Bīsutūn inscription DB). The most comprehensive collection for the period and the languages of the Achaemenid Empire is Tavernier (2007), with the Greek evidence excluded; not such a strong restriction is followed by Hinz (1975), who had attempted a similar collection, which should be used with caution, however. In every of the partial corpora of anthroponyms of that period, in the royal inscriptions as well as in contemporary Greek literature, the Achaemenid Empire's character as a multinational and multilingual state is clearly reflected.

More than 2000 anthroponyms, the great majority (about 90%) being of Iranian origin, are attested in the Elamite texts found in Persepolis (Fortification and Treasury Tablets) and thus come from the center of the empire itself, right where those names were in actual use. As a rule, the Iranian names differ so clearly from the Elamite anthroponyms that they can be assigned to Iranian quite easily. The whole of the evidence is collected and analyzed now in Tavernier (2007). The interpretation of this material with regard to Iranian is somewhat complicated by the all too irregular and superficial representation of the Iranian forms by the Elamite spelling, so that often varying Old Iranian original forms were reconstructed.

Similarly, in Babylonian texts from Achaemenid times, chiefly civil law documents (e.g. contracts and economic texts), a large number of individuals from all levels of Babylonian society (members of the royal house, officials, agents of commercial firms, and even chattel slaves) are attested; most of them bear Babylonian names, but we know also more than 600 Iranian anthroponyms from these sources. To these must be added the names attested in the royal inscriptions and those in astronomical texts. Apart from the usual difficulties caused by the blurred rendering of the Iranian names in Babylonian writing, the linguistic analysis of this material (collected now in Zadok 2009) is hampered by its distribution over the whole of Mesopotamia and of the Achaemenid period. The onomastic data testify by the way to a stronger acculturation of the Iranians there, since many individuals bearing a native Babylonian idionym have an Iranian patronymic or an ethnic indicating Iranian descent.

In the many texts written in Official Aramaic dispersed over the whole empire, among them the hundreds of papyri uncovered in Egypt, apart from

Aramaic and other names also a lot of Iranian anthroponyms are attested, which are only in part available in recent compilations (cf. Porten and Lund 2002). Moreover, some books of the Old Testament (written in Hebrew or Aramaic) contain dozens of Iranian names relating to Achaemenid times.

In Achaemenid Asia Minor, Old Iranian personal names are found in Lycian and Lydian inscriptions, not rarely also in Greek ones belonging to that time, whereas the later evidence shows that names originating in the Achaemenid period in some strongly Persianized regions lived on for centuries.

The principal focus of the Greek collateral tradition of Old Iranian anthroponyms is the literature, mainly the historians of the classical period (Herodotus, Thucydides, etc.), and in particular those authors who dealt with the Achaemenid Empire, with the Persian Wars, or the Greeks living in Asia Minor under Achaemenid rule. This material is collected and analyzed now in Schmitt (2011).

Iranian Names

- 1) Morphology: The system of the formation of personal names in the ancient Iranian languages is in principle the same as in the cognate languages, i.e. it is inherited from Proto-Indo-Iranian and Proto-Indo-European times. All of the various types of names (single-stem names, two-stem compound names, names shortened from compound names, and hypocoristics) are attested in Old Iranian and thus either in Old Persian itself or in the collateral tradition (cf. Schmitt 1995, 2005).
- 2) Dialectology: The numerous anthroponyms attested in the Elamite-language corpus of the Persepolis tablets offer a cross-section (even if not a representative one) of the population, as do in that late period those mentioned in the Babylonian-language private documents, so that one may recognize people of quite different tribes and nations. But the forms of the names let us also make out features of different Iranian dialects, and rather clearly in cases where pairs of names reflect such divergent phonetic development. It is remarkable that Old Persian forms appear in the Babylonian and Aramaic versions of the royal inscriptions, usually in non-Persian (probably Median) dialect forms.

Since in the formation of names not only the living and productive vocabulary of the time is used but, owing to the often traditionalist tendency of name-giving, also archaic and foreign lexemes that in the past had become part of the “onomastic vocabulary,” hybrid formations were possible, too, in which elements of different linguistic (or at least dialectological) origin are joined together.

Particulars

- 1) Motives for name-giving: Anthroponyms are not primarily motivated by the lexical meaning of their constituents; insofar they may not be understood as “meaningful” forms. Usually they can be interpreted as wishful names, by which the parents express their hope of strength, wealth, noble-mindedness, intelligence, or the like for their newborn child. For the motivation of choice, in particular cases the most common procedure is the custom of choosing some name that has already appeared in the father’s (or the mother’s) family, e.g. by naming the grandson after the grandfather (as in the series of Kuruš–Kambūjiya–Kuruš–Kambūjiya or Ochus–Arses–Ochus–Arses, if one takes the birth-names of the kings Darius II, Artaxerxes II and III, and Arses [= Artaxerxes IV?]). A popular means of expressing the family’s feeling of belonging together is to form a series of half-parallel, half-varying names by repeating one element of the father’s name in the sons’ names or one and the same element in the names of several brothers. Apart from the family tradition, name-giving after figures of history, mythology, fable, etc. can be observed. Because of such traditional giving of names one must be cautious about drawing any conclusions from names, e.g. those regarding the parents’ religious convictions.
- 2) Throne-names: The Achaemenid kings’ custom of changing the name at accession to the throne and to take a “throne-name” or “royal name” instead of the birth-name or private name is well attested in two independent traditions, viz. in Greek (and Roman) literary sources as well as in Late Babylonian chronicles and astronomical texts, that decisively confirm the literary evidence (cf. Schmitt 1982). Whereas in the official royal inscriptions only the throne-names appear, collateral tradition informs us about the birth-names of Artaxerxes I to III and Darius II and III, too. The throne-names assumed by the newly-appointed kings express some religious–political program or motto: OPers. *Dāraya-vauš* (Darius) “Holding firm/retaining the good”; *Xšaya-ṛšan-* (Xerxes) “Ruling over heroes”; and *Ṛta-xšaça-* (Artaxerxes) “Whose rule is through Truth (or sim.).” Since OPers. *Dārayavauš* is such a throne-name for certain, but the institution is attested already before Darius II, it seems to be obvious to postulate a throne-name already for Darius I (cf. Schmitt 1982: p. 93 = Schmitt 2000: 172f.). That the institution of throne-names actually began just with this king, who came to the throne not by normal succession, may be combined with the apparent break in the tradition of royal names just here, when the series of etymologically unclear and disputed names like *Cišpiš*, *Kuruš*, and *Kambūjiya* is followed by those fully transparent programmatic throne-names.

- 3) Onomastic and prosopographical identity: Since the evidence of Old Persian anthroponyms in genuine sources is rather limited and the wealth of material preserved in the collateral traditions often is not rendered accurately enough, it is important to join together for each single name all the material which eventually belongs together, in order to find out the original form (or forms) as exactly as possible. It is known that in particular the transcriptions in Mesopotamian cuneiform (i.e. in the Elamite and Babylonian languages) are not very precise, as we see, e.g., from the countless spelling variations mainly of the royal names (in the case of Darius more than 100). In general, one has to compare all the attested forms down to the last detail, because not rarely variant forms, e.g. a two-stem compound name and a shortened form or an allegro form, appear next to each other (cf. four-syllable OPers. *Xšāya-ršā* vs. two-syllable Gk. Ξέρξης).

Apart from the royal names and from the inscriptions recorded in several versions, the first question to be asked in such cases often is simply whether we have to do actually with one and the same name at all. Therefore evidence of both onomastic and prosopographical identity is particularly welcome and significant, not least material connecting the various branches of the tradition including the collateral one. For instance, Elamite evidence proved to be of decisive importance for identifying the original Old Persian forms of the names of the famous general Gk. Δᾴτις and the princess Ἀρτυστῶνη, as Elam. *Da-ti-ia* and *Ir-taš-du-na* gave unambiguous hints to OPers. **Dātiya-* and **Rta-stūnā-* respectively. Similar relations may be observed also between Greek and Aramaic or Babylonian evidence, e.g. for Σπιδάμας, son of Πετήσας (in Ctesias F 14 § 42), and *Is-pi-ta-ma-*, son of *Pa-te-e-šú*, in a document from the Murašû Archive dated 424/23 BCE (cf. Schmitt 2006: p. 193). And by equating the name Gk. Ἰερამένης with Lyc. *Eriyamāna* (both being closely connected with Τισσαφέρνης, Ὑδάρνης and *Kizzaprñna*, *Widrñna* respectively), even the Lycian Xanthus stele is a great help to make the Greek form understandable. It must be said, however, that something like a “*Prosopographia Imperii Persici Achaemenidarum*” is missing, as the study of Balcer (1993) is neither sufficient nor reliable.

Also more general points of view should be kept in mind, e.g. the fact that according to the Bīsūtūn text, all of the generals loyal to the king were Iranians, either “Persians” (as *Vaumisa*, *Dādṛšiš*, *Rtavardiya*, *Vivāna*, and *Vindafarnā* are explicitly called) or “Median” (*Taxmaspāda*), or at least bore an Iranian name (as the so-called “Armenian” *Dādṛšiš*, who may have his ethnic name only in contrast to some namesake). Now, things are similar with Herodotus’ list of the commanders of Xerxes’ army (7.61–97): all of them and their fathers (as far as they are mentioned) bear anthroponyms of Iranian origin and

therefore presumably were Iranians. A number of them are expressly called “Persians,” too, and some even especially “Achaemenids.” However, a warning against the information given by Herodotus (8.90.4): on the occasion of the battle at Salamis, he mentions that in case of some particular action, Xerxes had the name of a man written down together with his father’s name and his home town. The patronymic may have been given indeed (as we see from the list of Darius’ followers in DB IV 83–86), but to give also the native town seems to be a Greek way of thinking and has no Persian parallel.

Non-Iranian Names

In the Achaemenid Empire there are attested not only Old Iranian names but also, just as was to be expected in such a multinational and multilingual state, those of other provenance. In the Old Persian royal inscriptions we find Babylonian (*Nabukudracara*, *Nabunaita*, *Nadintabaira*), Elamite (*Aθamaita*, *Imaniš*), and even Urartian names (*Araxa*, *Haldita*). That the respective names abound in the particular linguistic corpora, viz. Semitic anthroponyms in the Babylonian and Aramaic inscriptions and documents, Elamite names in the Elamite Persepolis tablets, Egyptian ones in the Hieroglyphic and the Demotic texts of the period, is no surprise. The same is true also for the relevant Greek sources, where Babylonian (e.g. Ἀνδία, Λαβύνητος), Elamite (Ἀβουλίτης), Egyptian (e.g. Οὔσιρις, Πετησάκας, Πετήσας), etc. anthroponyms likewise are attested.

Of special interest is the onomasticon of the Persepolis tablets, where most of the non-Iranian names are of Elamite origin. They can be made out especially where the same form is found already in pre-Achaemenid Elamite texts or they contain without any doubt typical Elamite components. Zadok (1984) had attempted a formal analysis and reduction of Elamite names to their components and at the same time listed those onomastic componential stems. A more detailed interpretation is impeded, however, by the fact that the meaning of Elamite lexemes mostly is not exactly known; therefore Zadok’s typological sketch of the names has a more provisional character. A particular group of names are the hypocoristics, which are collected and analyzed by Zadok (1983); the most striking and the main type of such hypocoristics are forms with a reduplicated final syllable like *Ba-(iz-)zi-zi*, *Ha-pu-pu*, *Mi-te-te*, *Ša-at-ru-ru*, etc. (cf. Mayrhofer 1973: pp. 306–309; Zadok 1983: pp. 96–107). Sometimes those formations seem to have been modified to Old Persian hypocoristics in **-iā-*; in any case Koch (1990: pp. 171, 186, 213) drew this conclusion from couples like *Zi-ni-ni* vs. *Zi-ni-iz-za* and *Mi-te-te* vs. *Mi-te-iz-za* (cf. Hinz and Koch 1987: pp. 939, 1301), for which the prosopographical identity of the name-bearers may be inferred from the closeness of the contexts in which the names actually occur.

Babylonian names are attested in a still larger number, but there is no full collection of that material available, since that of Tallqvist (1905) has become outdated for a long time. As to the formation of the names, a lot of different types can be observed, one-stem, two-stem, or multi-stem names, shortened names, etc., in a way like the Indo-European and Iranian types of names but in the particulars quite different from them. Characteristic of Semitic name formation are chiefly the so-called sentence-names, by which a normal statement as well as a demand, wish, or question may be expressed. In general, also the Late Babylonian anthroponymy is the same as it was in the two millennia before. A comprehensive treatment of name-giving in Akkadian is found in Stamm (1939), a sketchy survey (with only a rudimentary typology) in Edzard (1998–2001).

Geographical Names

Our knowledge of geographical names of the Achaemenid period and the Achaemenid Empire is rather sketchy. From the royal inscriptions themselves the names of the countries (OPers. *dahyāva*) or satrapies of the empire and the ethnic names belonging to them are best known, in addition to a few toponyms, oronyms, and hydronyms. There are also large numbers of toponyms from the Elamite Persepolis tablets, which for the most part can neither be analyzed linguistically nor be localized exactly, however. Altogether those scanty onomastic relics do not allow any conclusions concerning the distribution, settlement, and spread of the various Iranian and non-Iranian nations. Research on the geographical names of Iran, based primarily on the inexhaustible information found in the medieval Arabian geographers and the modern maps as well as on topographical studies on the spot, has been furthered especially by Wilhelm Eilers (cf. Eilers 1982, 1987, 1988). His publications made clear that such names were kept tenaciously for thousands of years over all political, cultural, ethnic, and linguistic changes. Eilers expounded also the thesis that we have always to reckon with the spread from one category of names to another (e.g. from the name of a country to its capital city, from a river's name to that of the country irrigated by it, and so on), so that in any case it must first be clarified what was named by the form in question at the outset.

From those later sources we cannot gain essential information, however, for the Achaemenid times. So we have only a few certain entries on a virtual map of the Achaemenid Empire (see Vallat 1993; Tavernier 2007). The names of countries attested in the appropriate lists in part are confirmed, as regards eastern Iran, by some passages in the corpus of the Avesta describing the countries settled by the “Aryans,” i.e. Iranians (esp. Yašt 10.13–15; Vīdēvdād

1.2–19). In the Old Persian inscriptions most of the names of eastern Iranian countries are attested not in the original dialect form but as transposed into the Old Persian equivalent (OPers. *Harauvati*- “Arachosia” vs. Avest. *Haraxʾaitī*-; OPers. *Uvārazmī*- “Chorasmia” vs. Avest. *Xʾāirizəm*; OPers. *Θatagu*- “Sattagydia” vs. **Satagu*-), whereas the Babylonian, Aramaic, and in part also the Elamite collateral tradition normally has the original forms (e.g. Babyl. *A-ru-ḫa-at-ti*, etc.; *Ḫu-ma-ri-iz-mu*, etc.; *Sa-at-ta-gu-ú*, etc.). Only the name of Bactria is attested in a non-Persian, presumably the original, form as OPers. *Bāxtri*-, whereas the Old Persian equivalent **Bāxçi*- is reflected by Elam. *Ba-ak-ši(-iš)*. The ethnic names, which are derived from the names of the countries either without suffix (e.g. *Pārsa*- “Persia” → *Pārsa*- “Persian”) or with *-*iya*- (e.g. *Maka*- “Mekrān” → *Mac-iya*-) and in one single case with lengthened grade (*Margu*- “Margiana” → *Mārgav-a*-), are listed by Schmitt (1999: p. 450).

Apart from the names of the royal capital cities Persepolis, Susa, Babylon, and Ecbatana (OPers. *Pārsa*, *Çūšā*, *Bābiruš*, *Hagmatāna*), only a few names of districts as well as of towns and fortresses are found in the royal inscriptions, among them several of Semitic origin (such as *Izalā* in Assyria or *Arbairā*/Babyl. *Ar-ba-ʾil* “Erbil”). One of the few names of the Elamite Persepolis tablets which can be localized with certainty is that of Shiraz (Elam. *Ti-ra-(iz-)zī-iš*, *Ši-ra-iz-zī-iš* [= MPers. *šylʾc'*, once also *šylʾc'*], probably rendering OPers. **Θīrāčī*-; cf. Klingenschmitt 1980: p. 21). We are in a similar situation with the richest source of the classical geographical literature, viz. Ptolemy’s “Geography,” which provides only a few connections with the Elamite evidence.

The two great rivers of the Near East, Euphrates and Tigris, are called OPers. *Ufrātu*- and *Tigrā*- respectively in the Bīsutūn inscription; both of these forms are to be understood as reinterpretations of the pre-Semitic and probably even pre-Sumerian hydronyms Akkad. *Purattu*, *Idiglat*, or Sumer. *Buranun*, *Idigna* by folk etymology: *U-frātu*- as “With good fords” and *Tigrā*- as “Quick as an arrow-shot.” The contrast between the slowly flowing and easily crossed Euphrates and the rapidly raging Tigris which is passable only by boat (cf. DB I 86 *nāviyā*) is extremely well confirmed by the actual conditions. Also the name of the Nile river is attested in one of the Suez inscriptions (DZc 9) as *p-i-r-a-v*/Pirāva/, the form of which obviously renders the Egyptian name *pꜣ-jtrw*, “the river.”

Several Iranian rivers are called OIran. **Kuru*- (Gk. *Kῦρος*, *Kόρος*), the name of which was discussed in great detail by Eilers (1964), who interpreted it as “blind,” i.e. either “dark, murky” (namely muddy) or as “silting up, drying up” or similar. Other hydronyms can be made out for the Achaemenid Empire only as resulting in a country’s name (by application of a river’s name for the whole land irrigated by it), e.g. OPers. *Harauvati*- “Arachosia” (cf. Schmitt 2001).

Hardly any oronym is attested for ancient times. From the royal Achaemenid inscriptions we know only Mt. Lebanon (OPers. *Labnāna*), where the cedar-timber came from, and Mt. *Pr̥ga* (cf. NPers. *Furg*) and Mt. *Arakadri*, both of which probably are situated in southeastern Fārs.

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- Eilers, W. (1982). *Geographische Namengebung in und um Iran: Ein Überblick in Beispielen*. München: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Gives a very readable introduction to Iranian geographical names (names of towns, rivers, and mountains).
- Schmitt, R. (1982). Achaemenid Throne-Names. *Annali dell'Istituto Orientale di Napoli*, 42, pp. 83–95. Provides a survey of the literary and epigraphical evidence of the Achaemenid kings taking a 'throne-name' instead of the birth-name at the accession.
- Schmitt, R. (1995). Iranische Namen. In E. Eichler, G. Hilty, H. Löffler, et al. (eds.), *Namenforschung: Ein internationales Handbuch zur Onomastik: 1. Teilband*. Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, pp. 678–690. Offers an overall view of Iranian onomastics from prehistoric to modern times.

SECTION III

SOURCES

SECTION III.A

WRITTEN SOURCES

CHAPTER 6

The Inscriptions of the Achaemenids

Adriano V. Rossi

The Achaemenid royal inscriptions together with the Elamite administrative tablets from Persepolis are the most important direct sources to reconstruct Achaemenid history. Even if they provide less insight into the Achaemenid state organization than is commonly thought (political and administrative events are generally not recorded in them), they have the advantage of being contemporary to the events. Most of them have been found in Persis (Persepolis, Naqsh-e Rostam, Pasargadae), Elam (Susa), and Media (Bisotun, Hamadan). From outside the central regions of the state, barring the few inscriptions on objects and clay tablets, we know of three inscriptions by Darius from the Suez Canal, a rock inscription by Xerxes from lake Van in Armenia, and fragments of inscriptions from Babylonia.

While the Teispids basically produced monolingual inscriptions (Rollinger 2015: p. 117; see below for Kyros' name at Pasargadae), most of the inscriptions of Darius I and his successors were trilingual (OP, AE, LB). They are mostly engraved on rock walls, architectural elements, reliefs, and sculpture from royal residences or smaller portable objects connected to the activity of the court; an exception are the inscriptions on the statue of Darius I found at Susa, on which, besides the usual trilingual, hieroglyphic texts are carved (like other inscriptions from Egypt, cf. Briant 1999: pp. 99–113). Partial Aramaic translations of DB (late Achaemenid, end of the fifth century BCE) were found among the Elephantine papyri; this proves the circulation of the text in the didactic practice (the inclusion on the papyrus scroll bearing the Aramaic version of DB of various passages originating from different inscriptions points

to “a school-like milieu in which texts from the reign of Darius were not only studied but also used to create something new,” Rollinger [2015: pp. 125–126]) but not necessarily as an official act of the royal chancellery.

The sequence of the texts (OP>AE>LB) on the inscriptional supports and/or their spatial arrangement generally emphasizes the priority of OP on the other languages, of Elamite on Babylonian, though surely “written language was not part of the inherited sense of identity for Persian speakers” (Tuplin 2011: p. 158; about language and ethnicity, Stolper and Tavernier 2007: p. 22).

The bulk of the Achaemenid inscriptions, written on behalf of Darius, Xerxes, and the three Artaxerxes (especially the first), have possibly been planned in OP (see Chapter 3 Peoples and Languages), probably the (majority) language of the ethnic élite ruling over Fārs in the first millennium BCE. Although the basis for OP must lie in a southwestern Iranian dialect, ancestor to the Iranian dialects spoken in Fārs, the language attested in the inscriptions is likely to correspond to a *literary, artificial* form of it (Stolper 2005: p. 19; Jacobs 2012: p. 97); OP as we know it was probably a language “restricted to royal usage” (Schmitt 2004: p. 717).

The motivation underlying the choice of the three Achaemenid languages is not clear (Briant 1999: p. 94 suggests Darius’ intention to appear as “héritier des vieux empires ‘cunéiformes’ assyrien, babylonien et élamite,” cf. also Jacobs 2012: p. 105 fn. 57), and it is probably not by chance that “Elamite was the first language used by the Achaemenids for formal inscriptions” (Stolper 2004: p. 63; also Henkelman 2011: p. 585); perhaps “[t]he unbroken Elamite language tradition of Susa and Elam was continued with the inclusion of Elamite cuneiform in the [...] Achaemenid royal inscriptions” (Schmitt 1993: p. 457), even if it is difficult to determine the exact linguistic relationships between OP and AE (on Gershevitch’s [1979] hypothesis of an “alloglottography” of OP, never effectively proved and at odds with much AE evidence, cf. Stolper 2004: p. 64; Rossi 2006: pp. 78–84; Henkelman 2011: pp. 614–622; on AE and its contacts with OP cf. particularly Henkelman 2008: pp. 86–88, 2011: pp. 586–595, 614–622).

According to Jacobs (2012: pp. 103–104), the mere existence of DPd,e (OP), DPf (AE), DPg (LB) on the southern wall of the Persepolis Terrace, a four-column inscriptional complex attesting not different translations of a same original but a unitary discourse, points to a multilingual (and multicultural) ability to interpret the relevant metatext (on DPd,e,f,g cf. also Filippone 2012); Jacobs (2012: pp. 111–114) suggests an “ideal model of the ‘polyglot’ king,” as elaborated by Lanfranchi (2009: pp. 130–131) for the Neo-Hittite cultural area (in which “mastering foreign scripts and languages was clearly considered a point of honor for kings and rulers”). Most probably, anyhow, the Achaemenid usage of a quantity of languages has the same function as

displaying a quantity of different peoples in iconography (=OP *vispazana* “having all kind of people”; cf. Stolper 2005: p. 18 “trilingual inscriptions [...] emblems of the Achaemenid Empire’s immensity and complexity”).

It is commonly assumed – with no sure linguistic evidence – that the specific cuneiform writing created (at an unknown time) for the OP language, the “OP script” (its “name,” if any, is unknown, *pace* Hinz 1952: p. 30 and followers), has not been used before Darius: the scribes of Cyrus seem to have used Babylonian only, even if the extent of the documentation attributable to Cyrus is much reduced. Anyway, a few trilingual inscriptions are attested at palaces presumably built by Cyrus at Pasargadae, although many scholars claim that they were probably added later. Nylander (1967) questions that all OP inscriptions bearing Cyrus’ name were forgeries by order of Darius (Schmitt 2007: pp. 28–31): in his opinion Cyrus wrote the original texts in Elamite and Babylonian, Darius added their OP versions in a recently invented script. Vallat (2011: pp. 277–279) and the present author have supported the possible authenticity for all versions (mostly for paleographic reasons), even if one should admit in this case that the usage of OP script would have remained highly limited before Darius. Arguments in favor of Darius’ invention of it are critically examined by Huyse (1999: pp. 51–55, cf. Rossi [2020]); in favor of a greater antiquity have also been – for different reasons – Hallock, Mayrhofer, Diakonoff, Gershevitch.

As to the “oldest” OP documents, the two gold laminae bearing monolingual OP inscriptions of Darius’ great-grandfather Ariaramnes and his grandfather Arsames are hardly authentic; besides their linguistic “corruption” (Schmitt 1999: pp. 105–111, 2007: pp. 25–28), their appearing and disappearing from the international scene renders their contribution invalid.

The problem of the introduction of the OP script is closely connected to the interpretation of a Bisotun passage (DB/OP Section 70 = DB/AE L), where possibly the word for the whole epigraphic complex is OP *dipi[dāna-?]/AE tuppime* “the political message conveyed by the whole complex,” “Memorial,” cf. Rossi (2020: fn 75); Schmitt (2014: p. 169) reconstructs it as OP *dipi[ciça-* “[a]ls Bezeichnung der von Dareios “hinzugesetzten” (DB 4.89) altper-sischen Version von DB”. In the interpretation of the political message of DB/OP Section 70 = DB/AE L, I fully agree with Tuplin’s (2005: p. 226) sharp differentiation between “public display of a text with an iconographic component” (as for example the monumental reduced replica of the Bisotun Monument from Babylon) and “the more extravagant scenario of 70 in which the text alone will be sent ‘to the lands’ (i.e. throughout the empire).”

The scholars who assume that Darius wants to inform us that he had ordered the creation of a special script for his own language point to DP/OP §70 as a statement on this invention, irrespective of the fact that no royal inscription would mention such a detail – which is in itself extraneous to the “royal

discourse” – in the literacy conditions prevailing in any ancient Near Eastern country (cf. Rossi 2020).

The Bisotun complex (DB), carved high on the rockface dominating the main road leading from the Mesopotamian plain to Ecbatana, is an exceptional document (Schmitt 1990). It contains by far the longest Achaemenid royal inscription, strictly integrated with the accompanying relief (note: “inscription” OP *dipi-*/AE *tuppi*/LB *narú*, “relief” OP *patikara-*/AE *patikara*/LB *šalmānu*); most scholars believe that this is the oldest Achaemenid epigraphic complex. DB occupies a particular place among the Achaemenid inscriptions also with regard to its content. The first four columns relate how Darius took the power and coped with the uprisings that followed. A fifth column, added later, relates what happened in Darius’ second and third years; of this supplement, only an OP version was produced (for lack of space perhaps).

Careful investigation by German scholars (1963–1964) has revealed that the Elamite text was the first *carved* (not necessarily *produced*), followed by a Babylonian version, both of them flanking the relief. Only later was an OP copy inscribed below the relief. Part of the AE text had to be removed when the ninth rebel was added to the others, and the AE text was inscribed anew to the left of the OP text.

The relation between the texts attested in DB is still open to debate, however. At least two of them are translations, and it seems reasonable to assume that although the OP version was demonstrably (e.g. from some details of the minor inscriptions) *inscribed* later, it could have been the “original source text,” and not only as an oral text in the form of the king’s dictation (against the orality-only thesis also Henkelman 2011: pp. 614–622); Sancisi-Weerdenburg’s last stand (1999: p. 108), based on Borger’s (1982: pp. 106, 113, 130), seems to come back to the idea of an Aramaic original; Huyse (1999: pp. 57–58 and n. 66) hypothesizes an original ‘dictation’ in OP with a contemporary writing down in both Elamite and Aramaic (cf. Schmitt 1991: p. 20: “it may be (and indeed it has been) supposed that the text was originally written down (on the King’s Old Persian dictation) in the royal chancellery in both Aramaic and Elamite”; Schmitt [1998: p. 161] remains convinced that DB/OP is a retranslation from Elamite). The usage of Aramaic at some intermediate phase in the editing process has been hypothesized also by Sims-Williams (1981: p. 2) on the basis of two OP words “phonetically” transcribed in a fragmentary passage from an Aramaic DNb version. The present writer is convinced that all the texts of the Achaemenid royal documentation, including DB, are the product of the great activity of the efficient and influential royal chancellery to which the *verbal* expression of Persian kingship was assigned. Though acting on behalf of the king and with his (or his experts’) final approval, the scribal staff were responsible for the multilingual text

production, the way of organizing the information flow and selecting the lexicon with which the royal ideology was diffused and reinforced, and marking a set of countersigns aimed at the dissemination (cf. Filippone 2020; also Jacobs 2010, 2012). Particular attention to the audience of the royal discourse has recently been given by Jacobs (2012: pp. 110–114) and Rollinger (2014: pp. 203–204).

The exceptional length of DB allows focus on the ideological constructs and programmatic statements which we find also in other Achaemenid inscriptions (e.g. DN at Darius' tomb), all planned, together with their iconography, as an ethical and political message to his successors as well as an exhibition of royal power imagery for common people (cf. Jacobs 2010: pp. 108, 111, particularly contrary to the usage of the concept of “propaganda” in Achaemenid contexts).

Among the other inscriptions in the name of Darius and Xerxes, some are outstanding: those at Darius' tomb at Naqsh-e Rostam (DN) present the king as an ideal sovereign (for latest analysis of the interrelation between texts and iconography see Nimchuk 2001: pp. 68–91); the famous stone table discovered in the 1930s and known as “*Daiva* Inscription” (XPh) contains Xerxes' proscription of religious practices that were not devoted to the worship of Ahuramazda (Filippone 2010; Henkelman 2011: pp. 620–621; Rollinger 2014: pp. 200–201).

Among the minor trilingual texts there are a certain number of building inscriptions, connected with the palatial complexes at Susa and Persepolis (cf. for general information Stolper 2005: pp. 22–24; Rollinger 2015: pp. 117–121). Some texts (“foundation texts” in a broad sense, cf. Curtis, Razmjou 2005: pp. 56–59; Root 2010) were carved on stone (or precious metal) tables, in repeated exemplars laid in foundations and/or displayed in the buildings (as we know from fragments of display inscriptions in Susa bearing parts of the same inscriptions as those of the foundation tables, Steve 1974: p. 163). A series of short inscriptions (authorship marks) contains the name of the king and the denomination of parts of buildings, such as the inscribed knobs (Basello 2012) or the labels on the doorframes from Persepolis.

Longer texts containing statements by the king are separated into sections by the OP formula: *θāti xšāhyaθiya* “says the king.” A set of formulaic elements is generally present: an evocation to Ahuramazda, a statement of the king's name, royal epithets and genealogy; and a call for Ahuramazda's blessings on the king's works/land/household. The Achaemenid inscriptions contain Avestan echoes and more or less direct citations according to Skjærvø (1999) and Kellens (2002); on the attitude of the Achaemenids toward Ahuramazda and other religions see Jacobs and Trampedach (2013) and Jacobs (2014b). A list of subject lands/peoples (OP *dahyāva*/AE *dahyauš*/LB *mātātī*) is sometimes appended in different formats, but these variations

do not seem to point to actual political events (such as rebellions, changing role of different regions) since the narrative style of the royal discourse is mostly and intentionally timeless (cf. Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1999; Jacobs 2014a points to historical events that can be guessed in some specific cases).

A particular variant of these lists is contained in the inscriptions from the palaces of Darius at Susa (DSf, DSz), which list the subject lands/peoples entrusted with transporting and crafting the building materials. Short texts sometimes accompanying reliefs identify the figures as representatives of subject lands/peoples and are similar to those usually styled “label inscriptions” in Assyriology.

After Xerxes the royal inscriptions diminish in length, no lists of *dahyāva* are attested, and the only information besides genealogies concerns buildings (Rollinger 2014: pp. 201–202). A progressive change in attitude after Darius as regards the royal legitimation is studied by Jacobs (2014a).

Greek historiography reports about Achaemenid inscriptions that we do not possess. Some of them might have existed (Schmitt 1988), that (on (a) statue(s)?) at the Bosphorus, for which Herodotus (4.87.1) mentions two versions (στήλας ἔστηκε δύο [...] ἐνταμὼν γράμματα ἐς μὲν τὴν Ἀσσύρια ἐς δὲ τὴν Ἑλληνικά), may have been a quadrilingual monument as Darius’ statue (cf. recently Jacobs 2012: p. 110; Rollinger 2013: pp. 97–99, emphasizing Assyrian analogies).

An updated catalogue of all royal inscriptions is now available (Schmitt 2009: pp. 7–32); all other reference works (most quoted: Kent 1953, OP, now severely outdated) have only monolingual catalogues. Schmitt’s edition (2009: pp. 33–199) contains only OP texts and their German translations. A collection of OP texts (without DB) containing supplementary material data is Schweiger (1998); the only recent collection of all inscriptions in the three languages is Lecoq (1997, original texts not given). The first volume of a new critical edition (all Achaemenid royal inscriptions in all languages), by the DARIOSH editorial board, has appeared recently (Rossi et al. 2012; cf. also Rossi 2017).

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CHAPTER 7

Elamite Sources

Matthew W. Stolper

Introduction

Almost all of the Elamite royal inscriptions are versions of texts that were also displayed in Old Persian and in Akkadian. In the nineteenth century, when these trilingual inscriptions provided the basis for the modern decipherment of the cuneiform writing systems, the consequent study of Elamite, like the study of Akkadian, led to a wider and deeper corpus of pre-Achaemenid records that documents centuries of previously unknown history. The Elamite corpus, however, proved to be much smaller, less diverse, less dense, and less continuous than the Akkadian corpus. It was also much less tractable. While the early study of Old Persian and Akkadian benefited from flourishing comparative and historical research on related Indo-Iranian and Semitic languages, early attempts to identify and exploit known languages connected to Elamite were vain or misleading. Evidence from the other versions of the multilingual inscriptions was fundamental to the interpretation of Elamite lexicon and grammar.

Almost all Achaemenid Elamite administrative documents come from two groups excavated at Persepolis in 1933–1934 and 1936–1939. This large corpus differs from the royal inscriptions in contents, in rhetorical register and purpose, in syntactic and stylistic complexity, and in grammatical and orthographic variation. From the late twentieth century on, these practical texts have provided a rich context both for internal analysis of Achaemenid

Elamite language and for understanding of contact between Elamite and other written and spoken languages around the Achaemenid courts.

Elamite Language

Achaemenid royal inscriptions normally refer not to Elam as a place but to Elamites as a people (Elamite *Hatamtip*). The indigenous ancient name of the language is not attested. The consensus modern term “Elamite” reflects Sumerian and Akkadian references to the “language of Elam.” Soon after the decipherments, recognizing that the language of Achaemenid inscriptions of “the second kind” also appeared in many older inscriptions from Susa, some scholars called the language “Susian.” Others, contemplating the royal title found in those older texts, “King of Anzan and Susa,” and surmising that the language was original to a region farther from Mesopotamia than Susa was, called it “Anzanite” – even though the location of Anzan long remained a matter of disagreement (Potts 2011: pp. 36–37).

No ancient languages are known to be cognate with Elamite, and no later languages are known to be descended from Elamite. The hypothesis that Elamite is distantly related to Dravidian languages, a matter of disagreement among modern scholars, has had no firm consequences for the elucidation of Elamite grammar or lexicon. In practical terms, Elamite remains a linguistic isolate (Stolper 2004: p. 61 with references; Starostin 2002 with review of proposals and lexical evidence).

Readable Elamite texts are written in versions of the cuneiform script that was developed in Mesopotamia to record Sumerian and Akkadian. The script was also adapted to record other Near Eastern languages between the third and first millennia BCE, including Eblaite, Hurrian, Urartian, and Hittite. The Elamite adaptation of this writing system is economical by comparison with the Mesopotamian applications of it in two senses. First, the number of characters is comparatively small: slightly more than 200 characters are attested in Elamite cuneiform writing from all periods. Only 100–150 are found in any period, about 135 in Achaemenid Elamite (Steve 1992). Second, the incidence of homophony (many characters with the same signification) and polyphony (single characters with many significations) is comparatively small. Late pre-Achaemenid and Achaemenid Elamite sign inventories include a comparatively high proportion of logograms (characters representing words) because large groups of administrative records come only from these periods.

In Achaemenid multilingual royal inscriptions, the mostly syllabic orthography of the Elamite versions required fewer characters than the Old Persian but more characters than the Babylonian counterparts. For example, in the seal inscription SDa, the phrase “I, Darius, King” requires 12 characters in Old Persian, 10 in Elamite, and even with the title expanded to “Great King,” 9 in

Babylonian. In the main Bisutun inscriptions, the first four columns of the Old Persian text cover c. 27.33 m², the corresponding three columns of the Elamite c. 21.5 m², and the corresponding Akkadian c. 15.33 m² (King and Thompson 1907: pp. xxiii–xxiv). As a result, symmetrical displays of versions often required adjustments of character size or spacing and sometimes motivated editorial differences (cf. Henkelman 2003; Kozuh 2003).

Almost all pre-Achaemenid Elamite cuneiform texts come from sites in modern Khuzestan and Fars. The northern and eastern extent of the area in which Elamite was spoken is a matter of dispute. The oldest documents from the areas where Elamite cuneiform texts are found are written in two as yet undeciphered scripts, called Proto-Elamite (using about 1000 characters, found on about 1600 clay tablets, most from Susa, a few from sites in Fars, Kerman, and Seistan, dated c. 3100–2900 BCE, see <http://cdli.ox.ac.uk/wiki/doku.php?id=proto-elamite>) and Linear Elamite (using about 100 attested characters, found on 21 or more stone, clay, and silver objects, most from Susa, one probably from Fars, one fragmentary and uncertain example from Seistan, another from Margiana, dated c. 2100 BCE; see <http://cdli.ox.ac.uk/wiki/doku.php?id=linear-elamite>). It is plausible but not demonstrable that both scripts record texts in Elamite language. If so, the area in which Elamite was once spoken perhaps included easternmost Iran.

The oldest datable Elamite text written in cuneiform script, a treaty with a Mesopotamian king, comes from about 2100 BCE. Other pre-Achaemenid Elamite texts include about 210 royal inscriptions on bricks, stelae, reliefs, statues, votive objects, and other portable objects; about 400 administrative texts (almost all in two archival clusters, one from Khuzestan and one from Fars); about 20 letters (some excavated at sites in Assyria and Armenia) and legal texts (from Susa); an omen text and a hemerological text (from Susa). A few Elamite passages or glosses appear in Akkadian texts from Mesopotamia. Elamite names, words, and loanwords appear in Akkadian and Sumerian legal and administrative texts from both Mesopotamia and Iran.

Thus, by the time the Achaemenid kings began to keep written records, Elamite was long established as a language of practical literacy in southern and western Iran. It was used often for royal display and commemoration, sometimes for legal and administrative recording, and occasionally even for scholarly transmission. It was the foremost vehicle by which inhabitants of ancient Iran communicated in writing.

Royal Inscriptions

Elamite versions of about 75 Achaemenid royal inscriptions include rupestrial inscriptions, architectural inscriptions displayed on building elements, commemorative inscriptions on stone, clay, gold, or silver tablets associated with

royal buildings, and inscriptions on portable objects such as ornamental knobs of Egyptian blue, stone vessels, tableware, weights, cylinder seals, and statues. Almost all are versions of texts that were also presented in Old Persian, Akkadian, and occasionally Egyptian, on the same objects or structures as the Elamite versions, or on companion objects.

Most of the inscriptions with Elamite versions were displayed or deposited at sites in the core provinces of the Achaemenid Empire, in Persia, Elam, or Media. A few were displayed elsewhere, including the Suez inscriptions set up by Darius I in Egypt (DZb, DZc; Lloyd 2007: pp. 99–107) and the rock inscription of Xerxes at the citadel of Van in eastern Anatolia (XV). Inscriptions on the statue of Darius I that was made in Egypt and displayed at Susa included Elamite versions (DSab; Yoyotte apud Perrot 2010: pp. 256–299; Vallat apud Perrot 2010: pp. 312–313), as did multilingual inscriptions on stone vessels made in Egypt and carried to many other sites (e.g. DVsc [Westenholz and Stolper 2002], XVa–d).

The evolution of the multilingual Achaemenid inscription that is discernible in the texts on the monument of Darius I at Bisutun (DB, DBa–l) began with the Elamite versions, as the spatial arrangement of the monument reveals (Schmitt 1991: pp. 18–19 with references). The first text added to the relief was a monolingual Elamite inscription giving Darius' name, ancestry, and claim to royal descent (DBa), placed in the field of the relief, centered above the image of Darius. The second text was a first edition of the fully developed apologia, including the narrative of Darius' rise to power and suppression of his opponents, and his admonitions and exhortations to future rulers and readers, presented in Elamite (DB El. §§1–54), positioned immediately to the right of the relief panel. The agents of Darius first chose Elamite to commemorate his reconquest and restoration of the core territories of the empire. The concept of the Achaemenid royal inscription evolved during the expansion and revision of the Bisutun monument to envision a document displayed in an innovative multilingual form and propagated (as the fragmentary versions of DB from Babylon and Egypt reveal) in many monolingual versions.

The nexus between the Elamite and Persian versions is close. When the versions show differences in contents or word order, the Elamite most often agrees with the Old Persian against the Akkadian. In most cases where the Elamite and Old Persian disagree in the Bisutun texts, the Elamite appears to reflect an original wording, altered in the final edition represented by the Old Persian text. In a few cases, however, the Elamite diverges in ways that are not reflected in either of the other versions.

The several versions of most other, later, multilingual inscriptions were ordinarily composed and carved simultaneously, as is again clear from their spatial arrangement on single architectural elements or foundation documents,

in symmetrical panels of architectural ornament, on stone plates and vessels, or on cylinder seals. When the versions appear on the same surface, they are normally in a ranked array. At Persepolis, when three versions of an architectural inscription are displayed side by side, the Old Persian is commonly central, the other versions on either side (e.g. DPc, XPcb, XPdb, but not DPa, DPb, XPe). When three versions are displayed in vertical array, the Old Persian is normally uppermost, the Elamite below it, and the Babylonian below that (e.g. DPh, XPda, XPcb). The same order is normal in trilingual royal inscriptions in vertical array on stone weights (e.g. Wa–Wf) and on cylinder seals (e.g. SDa–SDe, SXd); it is also found in quadrilingual inscriptions on stone vessels (adding an Egyptian hieroglyphic version below the Babylonian, e.g. DVsc, XVs, AVs) and on one face of the quadrilingual Suez stele of Darius I (DZb-c), where the Egyptian hieroglyphic counterpart is on the opposite face.

The same ranking of versions also appears in the unique suite of four distinct but interrelated foundation inscriptions of Darius I (DPd–DPg) that were laid out in non-symmetrical array and carved all at one time in side-by-side panels on a single stone block, 7.2m wide, on the south face of the terrace at Persepolis. The two Old Persian inscriptions (DPd, DPe) are at the viewer's left, the Elamite inscription (DPf) to the right of them, and the Babylonian inscription (DPg) on the far right, that is, with the left-to-right sequence corresponding to the common vertical arrangement (and also found in the mirrored horizontal arrays of DPa and DPb). Each is a distinct text, but they are rhetorically connected as a series to be read from left to right, the language of each adding nuance to its specific contents. While the two Old Persian texts, in an archaizing version of the language of the empire's rulers, focus on royal and divine protection of the Persian land and people, and the Akkadian text, in a venerable language of the larger empire, asserts the geographical scope of the realm, the Elamite inscription (DPf), in the ancient indigenous language of the region, focuses on the construction of the “fortress” at Persepolis itself (see Lincoln 2008: pp. 223 and 231–233). The arrangement of the versions reflects a social and political nuance as well as a decorative choice.

Royal inscriptions on cylinder seals begin with the pronoun “I” and state the king's name and short title as appositions. Hence, unlike inscriptions on non-royal seals, they are self-predications rather than statements of ownership. Multilingual examples, with Elamite versions, come from the reigns of Darius I and Xerxes I. Only one actual seal of this kind is extant, said to have come from lower Egypt (Schmitt 1981: p. 19 SDa; Merrillees 2005: p. 52 and pl. vii, no. 16); eight others are attested indirectly by impressions on clay tablets, bullae, and sealings from Persepolis (Schmitt 1981; Garrison 2014; seals with royal name inscriptions impressed on sealings from Daskyleion, in western Anatolia, do not have Elamite versions: Schmitt 2002).

Administrative Texts

Most Achaemenid Elamite administrative texts belong to two archives discovered at Persepolis. The 20 000–30 000 excavated tablets and fragments of the Persepolis Fortification Archive are the remains of about 15 000–18 000 original documents, about 70% of them bearing Elamite texts (Jones and Stolper 2008). About 2400 of the Elamite texts have been published; a publication of about 2500 others, widely cited in preliminary form, is forthcoming; and editions of about 1000–2000 more are in preparation (Henkelman 2013; Henkelman *infra*, with references). They are dated between 509 and 493 BCE. They record the storage and distribution of food (cereals and cereal products, beer, wine, oil, etc.) and livestock in the region around Persepolis, to support workers, administrators, religious personnel, courtiers, and others.

All but one of the 746 excavated tablets and fragments of the Persepolis Treasury Archive bear Elamite texts, 138 of them published (Azzoni et al. 2017, with references). Most are dated between 492 and 457 BCE. A few are as old as 507–505 BCE (Stolper, Henkelman, and Garrison 2020). Most deal with payments of silver from a treasury in Persepolis to workers at or near Persepolis.

A single Achaemenid Elamite administrative text believed to come from Susa closely resembles texts from the Persepolis Fortification Archive, even bearing a seal found on Persepolis Fortification tablets (Garrison 1996). The sign forms, text layout, and few preserved words on a fragmentary tablet excavated at Old Kandahar, in Afghanistan, closely resemble those of Persepolis Fortification texts (Fisher and Stolper 2015). These isolated remains of lost archives suffice to show that the use of Elamite for state administrative recording was widespread in Achaemenid Iran.

Of other known isolated Achaemenid Elamite administrative documents, some originated in the Persepolis Fortification Archive (Vallat 1994: pp. 264, 272; Jones and Stolper 2006; Henkelman et al. 2006; probably Grillot 1986). Others, of uncertain provenience, may be survivors of lost archives (Jones and Stolper 1986: pp. 247–253; Garrison, Jones, and Stolper 2018).

Like Elamite versions of Achaemenid royal inscriptions, Elamite administrative records at Persepolis were products of a multilingual environment, in two senses.

First, though dominated by Elamite documents, the archives also included texts in other languages: more than 840 monolingual Aramaic Fortification texts, as well as single Greek, Old Persian and Phrygian Fortification texts, and two in Demotic Egyptian dealing with the same or similar matters as the Elamite records; and Aramaic epigraphs, aids to document handling, on more than 250 Elamite Fortification tablets. Archive keepers had to be passively proficient with information written in several languages, and actively proficient

enough to mark their handling of Elamite records with notes written in Aramaic (Azzoni and Stolper 2015).

Second, the many transcriptions of Iranian words in Elamite administrative texts (Tavernier 2007) and the frequent calques on Old Iranian syntax reveal that the records were composed by and for speakers of Old Iranian languages and dialects; for many or most of them, Elamite was an acquired written language.

Seal Inscriptions

About 5% of the seals impressed on Persepolis administrative texts had inscriptions, about half of the monolingual seal inscriptions (more than 90) are in Elamite, and about a quarter are in Aramaic. The seal inscriptions normally give the name, and sometimes the patronym, of the seal's original owner or his superior. A few of the Elamite seal inscriptions name the current seal users, who figure in the transactions recorded on the sealed tablets; they are sometimes figures of high social status or administrative rank (e.g. the seals of Šuddayauda [Garrison and Root 2001: pp. 268–270] or Ašbazana [Garrison 1998]). In many cases, however, the seal is associated with an office, and not with an individual user, and the name in the seal inscription is not connected with the personnel of the archives. Some of the Elamite-inscribed seals may have been heirlooms (e.g. PFS 93*, inscribed with the name of Kuraš [Cyrus], son of Šešpeš [Teispes], and others, see Garrison 2011), but others were transmitted by official succession or delegation. For users of the documents, the inscriptions alone – even if legible in fragmentary impressions – cannot have been either necessary or sufficient to identify the user and confirm the validity of the sealing.

Texts on heirloom seals are presumably pre-Achaemenid and early Achaemenid. Conversely, some seals with similar inscriptions, sometimes classified as pre-Achaemenid Neo-Elamite, may also be of Achaemenid date (e.g. Amiet 1973: pl. vi–ix; Garrison 2002 [2006]).

Elamite Sources of Old Iranian

Elamite transcriptions of Old Iranian words make Achaemenid Elamite texts the largest single source of Old Iranian lexicon in indirect transmission. Spelling variations, especially in administrative documents, reflect phonological and dialect variation in the forms of Old Iranian spoken around the Achaemenid courts and its differences from the archaic Old Persian of the royal inscriptions (Henkelman 2011a: p. 614f. n. 105). Similar variations in royal inscriptions also reflect editorial or stylistic choices (e.g. *miššadanaš*

[DNa] and *mišbadanaš* [DSe], *mišbazana* [DPa], representing Persian dialect **visadana*, half-Persian **vispadana*, and non-Persian *vispazana*, “of all kinds”; Tavernier 2007: pp. 34 and 78).

Transcriptions or translations in administrative texts sometimes provide common-register nuances of words or phrases otherwise attested only in the high rhetorical register of royal inscriptions: e.g. *miššadanaš*, etc., “of all kinds,” in royal inscriptions indicating the universal scale and scope of the Achaemenid Empire, but in Fortification texts referring to varieties of poultry, grain, or flour (Henkelman 2010: p. 746f.); *pirrašam*, transcribing Old Persian *fraša-*, “wonderful,” in royal inscriptions describing the palace at Susa (DSf, DSj, DSz) and all visible creation (DNa), but in Fortification texts, naming a kind of poultry, perhaps peacock (Stolper 2015: pp. 14–21); *halpi duhema halpik*, corresponding to Old Persian *uvamaršiyuš amariyatā*, “he died in his own death” in Bisutun describing the demise of Cambyses the king, but in a Fortification text, the passing of an ordinary administrative functionary (Stolper 2015).

Transcriptions in administrative texts represent Old Iranian social, administrative, and technical vocabulary that is often not attested directly in Old Iranian scriptures or royal inscriptions but that sometimes appears transcribed in Akkadian, Aramaic, Greek, or other languages, in texts from the Achaemenid Empire’s provinces and sphere of influence: for example, Elamite *kurtaš*, Aramaic *grd*, Akkadian *gardu*, all representing Iranian **grda-*, “worker, domestic” (Tavernier 2007: p. 423f.); Elamite *partetaš*, Akkadian *pardēsu*, Greek *παράδεισος*, etc., representing Old Iranian **pardēda*, **pardēsa*, cognate with the Old Persian hapax legomenon *paradaidā-*, “enclosure” (Tavernier 2007: pp. 446–447; Boucharlat 2016: pp. 62–65, with references). The dense attestations in Elamite administrative texts provide an essential term of comparison for interpreting the sparser evidence and distinct social contexts of Achaemenid presence elsewhere.

Writers of administrative texts could sometimes choose between transcribed Iranian terms and translation with Elamite synonyms (e.g. *kandabara* and *kanzabara*, Elamite transcriptions of Persian and non-Persian dialect forms **gandabara-* and **ganzabara*, respectively, all synonymous with Elamite *kapnuški-*, “treasurer”; Tavernier 2007: p. 422) or transcriptions of Iranian compound nouns and counterpart Elamite noun phrases (e.g. noun phrases with Elamite *kutira* corresponding to compounds with Iranian *-bara*, “bearer” or with Elamite *buttira* corresponding to Iranian *-kara*; Henkelman 2011a: p. 592). Elamite morphemes attached to some words of Iranian origin mark their adoption as actual loanwords (e.g. *kurtašbe*, “workers,” representing Iranian **grda-*, with an inappropriate Iranian nominal ending *-š* generalized to mark words of Iranian origin, and an Elamite plural marker *-p*, and, in the form *kurzap*, contracted on the model of Elamite verbs; Henkelman

2011a: p. 592). The writers of these documents, whether their first spoken language was Iranian or Elamite, based analogical coinages on spoken forms in both languages.

Variation and Contact

In many passages of the royal inscriptions, the Elamite morphology or word order corresponds closely to the Old Persian, departing from what historical Elamite grammar would call for: e.g. *u Pirtiya* [*Kuraš šakri*] *Kanbuziya igiri* “I (am) Bardiya [Cyrus’ son], Cambyses’ brother” (DB Elamite i 29f.), corresponding to Old Persian *adam Br̥diya ami haya Kurauš puça Kambujiyahiā brātā* (DB OP i 39f.); *Kammadda akka makuš* (DB Elamite i 48 and passim), corresponding to Old Persian *Gaumāta haya maguš* (DP Old Persian i 44 and passim) (Reiner 1960).

These passages have long been understood as calques that arose from an underlying editorial procedure in which a text conceived and dictated in a current form of Old Iranian was rendered both in Elamite translation and in Old Persian, with occasional changes of editorial nuance between the versions. When the Achaemenid Elamite administrative documents first came under study, they were similarly understood as texts in “translation Elamite” (Cameron 1948: p. 19), implying that the editorial procedure of the royal inscriptions was mirrored in the administrative procedure of the archive keepers. The extreme form of this view was the thesis of “alloglottography” by which the Elamite texts are mechanical representations of underlying Persian texts, dictated in Persian and read out in Persian by users who neither wrote nor spoke Elamite (Gershevitch 1979, 1987; modified by Rubio 2007: pp. 33–40). Implicit in such views was the idea that around the Achaemenid courts language was a primary and exclusive identifier, that most speakers and especially most writers of Elamite, Persian, and Aramaic belonged to distinct groups, that subject Elamites wrote documents for Persian masters.

Such views have been aptly criticized on several grounds, including these:

They are inconsistent with Achaemenid Elamite grammar, especially as attested in the administrative texts: even in sentences where calques on Iranian possessive, attributive or other constructions are present, Elamite sentence order differs from the Iranian counterpart (Yakubovich 2008: 207); apparent calques on Iranian constructions found in the royal inscriptions are productive constructions in the administrative texts; transcribed and loaned Iranian words include no verbal forms, and almost no non-enclitic pronouns or prepositions; Elamite words are not given Iranian case-endings, and most transcribed Iranian words do not have grammatically meaningful case-endings; variations cannot be understood as different “translations” of similar underlying constructions (Henkelman 2011a: pp. 588–592, 617–622).

They are inconsistent with the use of written languages at Persepolis and elsewhere, where individual scribes were literate in more than one language (Tavernier 2017: pp. 353–355).

They are historically implausible: speakers (and writers) of Neo-Elamite and speakers of Iranian vernaculars were in close contact, occupying the same territories, for at least several generations before the emergence of the Achaemenid Empire (Henkelman 2011a: pp. 594–595).

Achaemenid Elamite, as these critics cogently argue, is not an encoding of Old Iranian but a development of older Elamite affected by long contact with Iranian vernaculars, leading to a partial restructuring of the grammatical system. The restructuring favored formal similarity between Elamite and Iranian expression, modifying or creating Elamite constructions that paralleled Iranian word-order, morphology, and semantic distinctions (Yakubovich 2008: p. 207; Henkelman 2011a: pp. 588, 593, 594).

Grammatical and lexical variations indicate that most, but perhaps not all, writers of Achaemenid Elamite were native speakers of Iranian vernaculars who acquired Elamite as a second, written language and, for most, as a spoken language. Thus, the syntax of the Elamite administrative texts reflects a range of variation between extremes of preference for older Elamite grammatical constructions and for constructions that mimic Old Iranian syntax or morphology. Like the use of Elamite month names instead of transcribed Iranian month names (Hallock 1969: pp. 74–75), and use of Elamite synonyms for Iranian words, some of these choices were geographically conditioned. The Elamite options appear mostly in texts written to the northwest of Persepolis, along the route to Susa, suggesting the survival of Elamite as a native language, or at least the survival of proficiency in historical Elamite grammar and resistance to Iranian-influenced restructuring, in the region of later Elymais and the territories of the Ouxioi (Henkelman 2011a: p. 586, 2011b: pp. 8–11).

Comparable but less wide variation is discernible in the Elamite royal inscriptions. For example, in rendering the common royal title “king of kings,” inscriptions of Darius and Xerxes from Susa exhibit a strong (but not exclusive) preference for a historical Elamite possessive-attributive construction (*sunkir sunkip(ir)ra*, e.g. DSc, DSd, DSi, DSz, but not DSe) while inscriptions of the same kings from Persepolis and nearby exhibit a strong (but not exclusive) preference for another Elamite construction (*sunkir sunkip(in)na*, e.g. DPa, DPf, DPh, XPa, XPb, XPc, but not DNa) that corresponds more closely to the order and morphology of the Old Persian counterpart (*xšāyaθiya xšāyaθiyānām*).

A few passages in royal inscriptions imply an audience to whom the interplay of languages was meaningful. To appreciate the nuance and coherence of

the suite of Persepolis Foundation inscriptions DPd-DPg, for example, the ancient observer or his guide had to be literate in all the versions. Again, when Darius and Xerxes quoted the anticipated thoughts of the readers of Elamite versions, the thoughts were rendered once as transcribed Persian (*dayawišmi tarma ašdu* [representing *dahyāušmai duruvā *astu*] “my land, be safe,” DB Elamite iii 65), once translated into Elamite (*appa hamak dayawiš hube appa Dariyamawiš sunkir marrišda* “how made(?) (are) those lands that king Darius held,” DNa Elamite 33f.), and once partially transcribed and partially paraphrased in Elamite (*šada hanu* [representing Persian *šiyāta ahani*] *katukda* “‘may I be happy’ (while) you live” XPh Elamite 39). Darius and Xerxes expected the audience for their words not only to read and hear but also to think in Persian and Elamite together.

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CHAPTER 8

Babylonian Sources

Michael Jursa

Introduction

Thousands of cuneiform texts dating to the 200 years of Persian rule over Babylonia are housed in various museum collections. Excluding from consideration Achaemenid royal inscriptions written in Babylonian, the corpus can be usefully divided into archival documents and library texts. The former include legal documents, administrative notes, letters, lists, and similar text types. They necessarily have to be studied within the context of the archive to which they belong. The most important criterion for judging the nature of an archive is the presence, or absence, of title deeds for real estate and other document types of long-lasting value. A group that does not contain such texts is likely to be an “inactive” or “dead” archive, i.e. a group that has been discarded or set aside for being of no further use to its owners: a fact that obviously has a bearing on the historical interpretation of the tablets. The blanket term “library texts” includes literary compositions, texts of religious or magical contents, school texts, and “scientific” material such as divinatory compendia, lexical lists, or medical compositions (for the distinction between archives and libraries, see, for example, Pedersén 1998: pp. 1–9 and 2005: p. 10). The large number of texts from the period notwithstanding, the main find spots are few. They are surveyed here in geographical order, moving roughly from north to south. (Unreferenced information can be traced back

to Jursa 2005b, a comprehensive listing of the then known archives, with descriptions of their contents and bibliography.)

The chronological distribution of the material is uneven. The conquest of Babylonia by Cyrus in 539 BCE left nearly no trace in the nature of the documentary record; archives continue, tablet formats and tablet contents remain unchanged (e.g. Jursa 2007). For practical reasons distinctions can be made between the period of the Teispids, Cyrus, and Cambyses, and the reign of Darius I. This division does not imply fundamental differences in the nature of the sources but rather in the way they reflect Persian rule over Babylonia. On the other hand, the revolts against Xerxes in the second year of his reign (484 BCE) are a major watershed:¹ with very few exceptions, the large archives of northern and central Babylonia that constitute the rich source material for the “Long Sixth Century” that began with the rise of the Neo-Babylonian state at the end of the seventh century BCE come to an end. For the subsequent 150 years of Babylonian history under the Persians we have only above a quarter of the sources that are available for the first 50 years of this period. The archives that end in 484 BCE include two huge temple archives that span the entire sixth century as well as numerous archives of priestly families and Babylonian businessmen who had connections to the institutions of local (i.e. Babylonian) government. Southern archives and archives of Babylonian families who had close dealings with the royal administration or who at least were lacking the problematic links to the priestly class and the Babylonian city elites continued (Waerzeggers 2003/2004: pp. 158–160): the fate of an archive around 484 BCE is thus also a shibboleth for the socioeconomic placement of the archive holder(s). (In the following survey of the documentation, we use the label “Neo-Babylonian” for texts dating to the period of the Neo-Babylonian Empire, “Early Achaemenid” for Persian period texts up to the second year of Xerxes [even though “Teispid and early Achaemenid” would be more precise], and “Late Achaemenid” for all later tablets of the Persian period.)

Survey of Archival Texts

Sippar

Excavations in this northern Babylonian city yielded several private archives that are relevant in the present context, but most important of all, they brought to light the largest Neo-Babylonian archive of all, the archive of Ebabbar, the Sipparean temple of the Sun god (Jursa 2005b: pp. 116–133). The main temple archive extends from the mid-reign of Nebuchadnezzar to the second year of Xerxes: it comes to an end after the defeat of the Babylonian rebellions against Persian rule. The known part of the archive contains some 2500 tablets from the

Persian period; many more are hitherto unpublished. During the first decades of Persian rule, all aspects of Ebabbar's administration are reflected in the archive, but from the third decade of Darius' reign onward the distribution of the text types shifts toward more ephemeral groups: this is an inactive archive that was deposited in a storeroom after the removal of current files, title deeds, and other texts of immediate or lasting concern. Several private archives, mostly of priestly families, follow the Ebabbar archive's chronology and come to an end in 484 BCE. Foremost, one should mention the Šāhīt-ginê A archive (c. 200 tablets) of a family of priests and entrepreneurs who made a career in Sippar after moving to the city from Babylon (Waerzeggers 2014), the Šangû-Šamaš A archive, which belonged to priests who also worked as exorcists and kept a library of medical and magical material in their house (184 economic tablets and 88 medical tablets), and a small group of less than 30 texts that deal with the business of several branches of the Ša-nāšišu family, a clan that held high temple and provincial offices in Sippar and Babylon before the rebellions (Waerzeggers 2003/2004: p. 159; Jursa 2007: pp. 76–77). Recently, an archive of a merchant engaged in long-distance trade with Iran was published (Pirngruber 2020).

Babylon

For Babylon, we have to distinguish between tablets coming from illicit excavations, now housed overwhelmingly in the British Museum (and discussed first), and the finds of the German excavations, which are now in Berlin and Istanbul, at least to the extent that they have survived the vicissitudes of World War I and its aftermath (Jursa 2005b: pp. 60–76; Pedersén 2005).

In the unexcavated material, the Early Achaemenid period is represented by a number of private archives that all break off in the second year of Xerxes. The most important is the Egibi archive, which belonged to a family of businessmen who had aligned themselves during the early Persian period with the city governor of Babylon and his establishment (Abraham 2004; Waerzeggers 2003/2004: p. 159). Some 700 tablets of the archive date to the Persian period. The archive was deposited in several clay jars after the removal of title deeds and other texts of relevance for the last archive holders. Other family archives falling in this “end-of-archives” pattern include the Ea-eppēš-ilī A (60 tablets; priests, Baker 2008: p. 107; see also below), Nappāhu (291 tablets; priests), and Šangû-Ninurta (90 tablets; landowners) archives. Other archives from Babylon that include Early Persian period texts but end earlier than the second year of Xerxes are either small (such as the Rabâ-ša-Ninurta archive; landowners) or date mostly to the Neo-Babylonian period (such as the Sîn-ilī archive, which, as excavations in Babylon have revealed, was deposited in the Ninurta temple of the city during the reign of Darius, see below).

After 484 BCE, the number of texts from Babylon plummets. There is one lot of tablets mostly from the fourth century that can be associated with the Esangila and that extends chronologically into the early third century (Clancier 2009: p. 198): about 200 texts, mostly ration lists, document the administration of the temple of Marduk in this period (Jursa 2005b: pp. 73–75; Hackl 2021 presents numerous unpublished texts). Otherwise, recognizable Late Achaemenid archives from Babylon in the British Museum collections are rare: 10 tablets belong to the well-to-do landowner and “architect” Bēl-ittannu (second half of the fifth century BCE), eight tablets are associated with the landowner Dahhū’a, son of Arad-Bāba, and another small group, four tablets, to a boat owner and businessman by the name of Nidintu (reign of Xerxes and Artaxerxes I).

The German excavations at Babylon brought to light a considerable number of Neo- and Late Babylonian tablet groups (Pedersén 2005: pp. 110–296; Clancier 2009: pp. 147–49). A majority of the tablets date to the period of the Neo-Babylonian Empire. The most remarkable group among the archives of relevance for Persian period texts is the archive of the governor Bēlšunu, whose originally nearly 1000 tablets (not all are preserved) mostly date to the reigns of Artaxerxes I, Darius II, and Artaxerxes II but also contain a small number of texts from the reign of Nebuchadnezzar and Darius I (Pedersén 2005: p. 146; Jursa 2005b: p. 61). With this exception, no clearly-definable archive straddles both sides of the caesura of 484 BCE, and the Late Achaemenid (i.e. post 484) excavated material is objectively “rather scarce” (Baker 2008: p. 107), while the texts dated to the reign of Darius I dominate the documentation from the Persian period, as in the case of the material in London. Apart from the Bēlšunu archive, there are no Achaemenid period texts from the Kasr area of Babylon. The two private business archives from the Merkes area that date to the Achaemenid period come to an end, on the basis of the available information, in the first or second year of Xerxes’ reign, thereby repeating the pattern well known from the material from illicit excavations (Baker 2008: pp. 105–107; Oelsner 2007: p. 292¹ and 303): viz., the archive of Nabû-ittannu (20 tablets) and the largest and actually only well-defined Early Achaemenid archive from the German excavations,² the archive of Iddin-Nabû of the Egibi family (163 tablets). As is typical for the “end-of-archives” groups, this is an inactive business archive lacking in title deeds (Pedersén 2005: pp. 208–217). From the Homera area comes a group that belongs to the Ea-cppēš-ilī A archive, which is otherwise known from unprovenanced tablets mostly in the British Museum. This archive ends in 484 BCE (Baker 2008: p. 107). From the Ninurta temple in the Išin Aswad part of the mound there comes the Šin-ilī archive (Pedersén 2005: pp. 228–247; Jursa 2005b: pp. 69–71), a business and family archive of more than 500 tablets (of which some 160 were found by illicit excavators and sold on the antiquities

market) that was deposited in the temple after the removal of current files for an unknown reason. The archive spans the time between 599 and the eighteenth year of Darius I (504 BCE – but the bulk of the material is Neo-Babylonian); a small group (12 tablets) of Late Achaemenid texts from the Ninurta temple has no apparent connection with the larger archive (Pedersén 2005: p. 231). Tablet finds in the private houses northeast of the Ninurta temple (the archeological context is unclear) include several badly-defined groups of archival tablets and library texts which, as far as they are dated, mostly come from the Neo-Babylonian period, with smaller numbers of early Achaemenid texts (down to the reign of Darius I); late Achaemenid material is present, but rare, and unconnected with the earlier finds. The only recognizable archive is that of members of the Rab-banê family of close to 100 business documents, most of which are Neo-Babylonian (the latest known text dates to the third year of Darius I; Pedersén 2005: p. 252); there is also an uncertain number of library texts. From the Amran section of Babylon come several badly-defined groups of archival texts, including Late Achaemenid and Hellenistic texts, as well as some literary tablets. The Esangila temple, which is situated in this area but was barely excavated, yielded only eight tablets, of which only one is dated (to the reign of Cambyses). From the Sahn area (where the temple tower, Etemenanki, was situated), assorted Neo-Babylonian and early Achaemenid material was recovered, but no later texts.

Borsippa

This city yielded a rich crop of private archives and remnants of the temple archive of Ezida, the main temple of the city. This material, housed primarily in the British Museum, dates predominantly to the early Achaemenid period. Of the more than 1850 tablets, many are still unpublished (Waerzeggers 2010).³ Some of these archives are large: the Rēʾi-alpi archive contains more than 400 tablets, the Ilia A archive over 250, and the Ea-ilūtu-bani group around 325. Most of the archive-holding families were of priestly origin, and the texts refer to their involvement in the cult and the management of their estates. The archives are also by far the best source we have on early Achaemenid taxation. The priestly archives and the Ezida texts, in particular the *iškaru* file, come to an end in 484 BCE and display the pattern typical of “end-of-archives” groups: property documents and the like of the last generation are missing (Waerzeggers 2003/2004: p. 156). The only significant archive that straddles the dividing line of 484 BCE is the Tattannu archive (Jursa and Stolper 2007). This archive, whose chronological range is unusually long, from the late sixth to the early fourth century, consists of the business documents of an extraordinarily rich family of landowners who seem to have had contacts to the crown and who in addition to exploiting their holdings engaged in various

entrepreneurial activities. The Tattannus are an example of a stratum of Babylonian society that was not affected by the events of 484 BCE. Otherwise Late Achaemenid texts from Borsippa are rare; very few archives can be identified. A small group of Ezida tablets from the reign of Artaxerxes III deserves mention as they are indirectly connected with a similar such group dating later in the Hellenistic period. Also they constitute evidence for the changes in the administration of the Ezida temple that had occurred after the late fifth century BCE (Waerzeggers 2010: p. 10; there is additional material on Ezida from other archives).

Cutha

This northern Babylonian city is one of the few find spots that have not produced important documentation from the Early Achaemenid period but have produced Late Achaemenid material: several small private archives of well-to-do Cuthean families from this period are housed in the British Museum. One group also contains retroacts dating back to the reign of Darius I. The texts are mostly relevant for the light they shed on the urban structure of the city, the price levels of the periods, and the indications regarding the continuing importance of the Emeslam, the chief temple of the Cutha (Jursa 2005b: pp. 97–98).

Kiš/Hursagkalama

Excavations have yielded several small archives, both private and institutional (Jursa 2005b: pp. 102–107). Three private groups date to the Early Achaemenid period: the archive of the sons of Nabû-ušallim (ending in 484 BCE) and the Eppēš-ilī and Rē'i-alpi archives. Late Achaemenid groups include the archive of a slave engaged in various types of business (Bēl-ana-mēreḥti), the archive of an entrepreneur working mostly in the area of agriculture (Mušallim-Bēl), and a group of tablets associated with the property of a high royal official (*rab umma*) of Babylonian origin (Lâbâši). Finally, there is a group of texts associated with the administration of the main temple of Kiš, the Edubba. The bulk of the material consists of ration lists that date to the reign of an Artaxerxes, hence the late fifth or to the fourth century BCE. This group is interesting for the close formal parallels to the contemporary Esangila archive from Babylon.

Isin

Only a small group of tablets dating to the reign of Darius I is of relevance here. These texts document the management of royal estates by a Babylonian businessman (Jursa 2005b: p. 102).

Kissik

From this city in the far south come several (unpublished) contracts, school texts, and administrative documents from a Ningal temple. The extant dated material stems from the reign of Darius I (Jursa 2005b: p. 102).

Dilbat

This important city on the Euphrates yielded one archive belonging to the “end-of-archives” group. It belonged to the Dābibī, a family of priests and temple officials employed in the E-imbi-Anu, the main temple of the city. The texts include some property documents of the family’s core archive as well as records having a bearing on the administration of the E-imbi-Anu temple during the reign of Darius I (Jursa 2005b: pp. 98–99). Some Late Achaemenid texts that were written in Dilbat are known, but they do not form a coherent group (Stolper 1992).

Nippur

The textual record from this central town (Jursa 2005b: pp. 110–116) in central Babylonia has played an important role in the history of research on Achaemenid Babylonia owing to the presence of the Murašû archive, probably the single most important source of information on late fifth-century BCE Babylonia, and certainly the best studied (Stolper 1985; Donbaz and Stolper 1997). Yet the site cannot serve as a paradigm for all of Babylonia owing to the isolated position of the city and to its – relatively speaking – economic “backwardness” during much of the first millennium BCE (Jursa 2010: pp. 405–418).

The tablet groups from Nippur include a fragmentary archive associated with the main temple of the city, Ekur. The archive can be divided into a Late Achaemenid group from the late fifth and the early fourth century and an early group that extends from the late reign of Nebuchadnezzar to the late reign of Darius I and may well belong to the “end-of-archives” category even though material dating to the period of the rebellions is still missing. Early Achaemenid private groups include the archive of Bēl-eṭēri-Šamaš, an entrepreneur who did business with the Neo-Babylonian and the Persian administrations (the archive comes to an end in the first year of Cambyses; Jursa 2005a), and a small dossier of business texts originating in the milieu of Carian mercenaries who had been settled in the hinterland of Nippur. The Late Achaemenid period is represented by two private archives: the Murašû archive and the Absummu archive. The latter is a group of more than 50 tablets documenting the activities of the archive holders as temple scribes, administrators, exorcists, and priests working in the Ekur temple. The chronological range

extends from the end of the reign of Artaxerxes I to the end of the reign of Artaxerxes II. The Murašû archive of more than 700 tablets, ranging from the tenth year of Artaxerxes I to the first year of Artaxerxes II, is a business archive of a family of entrepreneurs who specialized in agricultural management, working in the hinterland of Nippur in an area that was dotted with the holdings of collectives of soldiers (often of foreign extraction) and large domains of Persian nobles. The archive is an extremely rich source of information on Achaemenid period land tenure and generally on the economic history of the period, as well as on tax and service obligations and the organization of the Babylonian component of the Persian army.

Ur

The documentation from this ancient southern city includes several small archives of the Achaemenid period (Jursa 2005b: pp. 133–138): the file of Nidinti-Ea (Late Achaemenid), the Imbia archive (reign of Darius I), and most importantly the Gallābu archive. This is a group of more than 50 tablets with an extraordinarily long chronological spread: seven generations of the archive-holding family are attested, the texts date from the 29th year of Nebuchadnezzar II to the fourth year of Darius III and thus to the very end of the Achaemenid period. The tablets deal with the management of the not very extensive properties of the family (Popova 2018).

Uruk

At two junctures, the documentation from Uruk (Jursa 2005b: pp. 138–149) reflects the far-ranging consequences of the Persian government's interventions in the affairs of a provincial city and in the textual record left by local institutions and local families. The largest archive from Uruk is that of the Eanna temple (c. 8000 published and unpublished tablets and many more unpublished fragments). The chronological range is similar to that of the Ebabbar archive: it starts in the late seventh century and ends toward the end of the reign of Darius I (the latest known text dates to the twenty-ninth year of this king). However, the revolts against Darius at the beginning of his reign and a reorganization of the temple administration in the king's second year mark an important juncture: the main temple archive that was recovered by controlled excavations and by illicit diggers breaks off in this year; there is only a handful of tablets from Darius' later years (van Driel 1998; Frahm and Jursa 2011: pp. 24–29). In the aftermath of the rebellion against Xerxes, reprisals targeted those leading families of the city who had come from Babylon. The northerners were removed from their offices, the importance of the northern Babylonian gods Marduk and Nabû in the local cult was drastically reduced, and the local god Anu was promoted to chief deity in Uruk. The Urukian

priesthood transferred their offices from Eanna to the Anu temple which experienced a steep ascendancy at the time while the old Eanna temple was allowed to fall into ruin (Kessler 2004: pp. 250–251; Kose 1998: pp. 9–16).⁴ The Early Achaemenid private archives of priests (belonging to northern clans) that were excavated in private houses in the vicinity of the Eanna temple and archives that were found intermingled with the Eanna temple archive follow this “end-of-archives” pattern: there is no Late Achaemenid material; 484 BCE is a major watershed also in this case. The most important of these archives is the Egibi archive (the Egibis were a northern family) of some 200 tablets, of which none postdates the thirty-third year of Darius I. In contrast, there is at least one archive of a local priestly family that was excavated in another part of the site (U 18) and that spans the juncture of 484 BCE: the Gimil-Nanāya B archive. Other U 18 groups are Late Achaemenid: note the contracts of the Ekur-zākir family from the reign of Darius III and the early Seleucid area that belong with the large library of literary texts associated with the family. Overall Late Achaemenid material from Uruk is scarce (also in contrast to Seleucid material) even though there are a number of stray tablets that cannot be assigned to well-defined archives (Stolper 1990; Hackl 2017).

Larsa

This minor town in the vicinity of Uruk has left one archive of a family of businessmen that stretches from the middle of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar to the second year of Cambyses: the archive of the sons of Itti-Šamaš-balātu (Jursa 2005b: pp. 108–109). The archive is interesting for the continuity of business and also of tax and service obligations that are not visibly affected by the conquest of Babylonia by the Persians. There is some dispersed Late Achaemenid material (Stolper 1990) and one small dossier that extends from the end of the Achaemenid period to the early Hellenistic era (Jursa 2005b: pp. 109–110; more texts have been located in a private collection and will be published in the near future).

Varia

A group of texts documenting the economic and social life of communities of deported Judeans who were settled in southern Babylonia, probably between Nippur and Uruk, came to light in the 1990s on the antiquities’ market (Peirce and Wunsch 2014). This group contains a few Neo-Babylonian texts (dating as far back as the reign of Nebuchadnezzar), but the bulk of the material dates to the reigns of Cyrus, Cambyses, and Darius I. With the accession of Xerxes, the number of tablets decreases rapidly, but a few texts do postdate 484 BCE. The archive documents the management of the fields assigned to the deportees, their tax and service obligations vis-à-vis the royal administration, and aspects of the private business of some of the more affluent of these Judean families.

A small Late Achaemenid archive (seven tablets dating to the late fifth and the early fourth centuries BCE) documents the affairs of a family of landholding priests living in the village or small city of Šaṭir between Uruk and Nippur (Jursa 2005b: pp. 150–151).

Library Texts

The Late Babylonian library texts are an important testament of the vigor of Babylonian cultural life under foreign occupation. However, they have not yet been analyzed comprehensively as a group. Library texts are normally undated. If, as happens frequently, colophons naming identifiable scribes, a meaningful archeological context, or a connection with dated archival texts are also missing, dating depends on the evaluation of epigraphy and tablet formats. Owing to a lack of pertinent research, it is currently possible only to distinguish a broad category of ‘late’ texts dating roughly to the late fifth through second centuries from tablets originating in the late seventh, the sixth, and perhaps also the early fifth centuries: distinguishing Late Achaemenid from Seleucid period literary tablets is often impossible. With this general uncertainty in mind, the following major “libraries” can be assigned roughly to the Achaemenid period.

From Uruk comes the library of the Eanna temple, 400-plus texts and fragments, having a chronological range (on the basis of archeological context and accompanying administrative texts) from the Neo-Babylonian period to the second year of Xerxes (Pedersén 1998: p. 206; Clancier 2009: pp. 34–35; other, later temple libraries from Uruk include no, or nearly no, Late Achaemenid material and date exclusively to the Seleucid period). Two libraries of families of exorcists have been recovered in a private house, one dating to roughly 445–385 BCE, the other from the second half of the fourth to the end of the third century (Clancier 2009: pp. 58–61). The texts include predominantly magical, medical, and divinatory material, as well as school texts and some mathematical compositions (Clancier 2009: pp. 81–82).

From Babylon, we have a large group of literary texts of all descriptions that can be associated with the Esangila temple. The texts include a vast group of astronomical texts, perhaps as many as 3000 (see, e.g., Ossendrijver 2012), as well as divinatory, magical, and some medical material, other learned compositions, viz., mathematical and lexical texts, commentaries and school texts, and finally a few historical and historical-literary compositions (Clancier 2009: pp. 205–212). The chronological distribution of the dateable astronomical material suggests, however, that the bulk of this library is post-Achaemenid (Clancier 2009: pp. 309–311). Among the astronomical texts, the Astronomical Diaries deserve special notice. These mostly post-Achaemenid texts are records of astronomical observations accompanied by price data, information on the water level of the Euphrates, and occasional notes on remarkable incidents of political, economic, or social nature and/or of ominous portent (e.g. Pirngruber 2012).

The excavated material from Babylon (Pedersén 2005) consists predominantly of archival texts, as detailed above, but some literary material was recovered too (Clancier 2009: pp. 147–149). According to the information given by Pedersén, this material is mostly Neo-Babylonian or in any case predates the reign of Xerxes (see also Baker 2008). This is true for finds on the Kasr (Pedersén 2005: pp. 185–186) and on Išin Aswad (ibid. 247–272), as well as for the “libraries” found in the Ištar temple (ibid. 188–192) and in the Ninurta temple (ibid. 232⁵). Numerous hitherto unpublished tablets without a clear archeological and archival context cannot be dated.

In the Ebabbar temple in Sippar, a large collection of literary and scholarly tablets was recovered by Iraqi excavators in the 1980s (Pedersén 1998: pp. 194–197). The library contains omen collections, prayers, incantations, and hymns, as well as copies of some of the most important myths and epics of Mesopotamian literature. Several scribes mentioned in the colophons of these texts can be identified with priests known from the administrative Ebabbar archive (Fadhil and Hilgert 2008; Schaudig 2009); the library is thus to be dated to the (later) Neo-Babylonian and Early Achaemenid period, 484 BCE being the *terminus ante* or *ad quem* for its deposition.

Conclusions

The total number of texts that can be dated to the Persian period cannot be established definitively owing to uncertainties of the dating of damaged tablets or of texts that can be assigned only a rough date on the basis of prosopographic, diplomatic, or epigraphic evidence. Rough approximations for the material known to us are as follows (unread tablets that are simply listed with their dates in the catalogues of the British Museum and in Pedersén 2005 have not been included):

Sippar	reigns of Cyrus and Cambyses: c. 1200 tablets reign of Darius I until the second year of Xerxes: c. 1400 tablets
Borsippa	reigns of Cyrus and Cambyses: c. 450 tablets reign of Darius I until the second year of Xerxes: c. 1400 tablets
Babylon, Kiš, Nippur, Dilbat	reigns of Cyrus and Cambyses: c. 600 tablets reign of Darius I until the second year of Xerxes: c. 1200 tablets
Uruk	reigns of Cyrus and Cambyses: c. 800 reign of Darius I until the second year of Xerxes: c. 90
Total	Cyrus and Cambyses: 3050; Darius I (including the first years of Xerxes): 4090

Structurally, these texts are no different from those of the preceding Neo-Babylonian period; most of the larger archives straddle the year of conquest, 539 BCE. There was not fundamental change at this juncture. What internal developments can be seen are gradual, not abrupt. The social groups to which the archive holders belong include many priests as well as entrepreneurs and traders of various degrees of prosperity (archive-holding craftsmen and subsistence farmers are attested but rare); and there are of course the huge archives of the Eanna and Ebabbar temples. The contents of the tablets include household and property management and various types of business (agricultural matters, local and long-distance trading, tax and income farming, manufacturing, financial transactions ranging from small-scale money-lending to ambitious investments in business companies; Jursa 2010). Apart from occasional references to the Great King (always a distant and shadowy figure), to members of the royal family and their personnel, and to Persian officials (e.g. Tavernier 2007), Persian rule is reflected most clearly in the documentation for tax and service obligations, where one hears, for example, about the construction of several royal palaces, the building program of Darius in Susa, and the construction of a canal (the Kabar canal) that was to link southern Babylonia with the Susa region (see Chapter 67 Taxes and Tribute and Tolini 2011).

From later periods, we have fewer than 100 tablets dating to the reign of Xerxes from all of Babylonia (after 484 BCE). From the rest of the fifth century (reigns of Artaxerxes I and Darius II), there are perhaps as many as 1500 tablets (it is not always possible to assign isolated texts dated to the reign of an Artaxerxes to one of the three kings of that name). The most important find spots are Babylon, Borsippa, Cutha, Kiš, and Nippur; tablets from the south (Ur, Uruk, Larsa) are far less numerous. In the fourth century, there is a further decrease in tablet numbers: perhaps around 400 tablets can be dated to this period (on the assumption that the bulk of the Artaxerxes tablets of the Esangila archive dates to Artaxerxes II or III). Only a handful of tablets dates to the reign of Darius III. The most important fourth-century find spot is Babylon; also Kiš and Borsippa in the north and Ur in the south yielded some coherent groups. Notable tablet groups, apart from the Esangila archive, include the highly anomalous Murašû archive from Nippur and the Bēlšunu and Tattannu archives. While the former is the archive of a family of Babylonian businessmen active within the sphere of state-sponsored agriculture and tax farming, i.e. in an area of the economy that is documented, albeit in a different form, also in the early Achaemenid period, the latter two archives belonged to extraordinarily rich Babylonian families with close ties to the Achaemenid government, and, in one case at least, with a tradition of holding high offices: this stratum of Babylonian society is not well represented in the earlier period. The comparatively small number of sources notwithstanding, much is known about

the institutions of Achaemenid rule over Babylonia during the Late Achaemenid period because of this particular socioeconomic setting of the material.

NOTES

- 1 The interpretation of the events of 484 BCE and the “end-of-archives” phenomenon have been widely discussed (bibliographical references in Henkelman et al. 2011: pp. 452–453), but the material basis of the evidence as presented by the key studies of Waerzeggers 2003/2004 (with Oelsner 2007) and Kessler 2004 remains firm. Some of the recent statements on the subject underrate the incisiveness of the institutional changes that occurred in or after 484 BCE. See now Waerzeggers and Seire 2018.
- 2 In the sense that the bulk of the tablets dates to the Early Achaemenid period. There are a few other groups that include Early Achaemenid tablets, but the majority of the texts of these archives are Neo-Babylonian.
- 3 Also the tablets found by the Austrian expedition to Borsippa remain unpublished.
- 4 A temple northeast of Eanna was destroyed by fire and not restored at this time (a text dated to the reign of Darius gives a *terminus post quem* for the destruction): Kose (1998: p. 10) and Lenzen (1958: p. 15 note 24).
- 5 On the assumption that the library texts are contemporaneous with the Šin-ilī archive that was found with it. They might conceivably also belong with the small group of Late Achaemenid tablets excavated in the temple (Pedersén 2005: p. 231): only publication and epigraphic study can tell.

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CHAPTER 9

Aramaic Sources

Holger Gzella

Achaemenid Official Aramaic

When the Achaemenid authorities promoted an Aramaic dialect to the official administrative idiom of their vast and highly heterogeneous empire, this was a sensible if not an obvious choice. Aramaic had spread continuously throughout the Fertile Crescent soon after its appearance in writing in tenth- to ninth-century BCE Syria (though it presumably acted as a vernacular even before that time) and subsequently gained much ground in the administration of the Neo-Assyrian and the Neo-Babylonian empires. As a consequence, it was widely understood, especially among scribes and officials, formed part of an entrenched institutional framework that provided a considerable degree of professional training, and had already developed a suitably broad technical terminology as well as a sufficient number of established literary forms for letters, contracts, and economic documents current in east and west. An eighth-century inscription from Bukān (KAI 320; Sokoloff 1999) points to an early presence of Aramaic in Iran, and the Adon letter (TAD A1.1) demonstrates that this language was known at least in some places in Egypt toward the end of the seventh century BCE at the latest. So when the Achaemenid dynasty rose to power and felt the necessity for an efficient medium of international communication by which the king's wish could manifest itself between Egypt and present-day Afghanistan, it did not have to reinvent the wheel.

The driving forces underlying the increasing popularity of Aramaic in the Near East early in the first millennium BCE, at the expense of Akkadian, still defy explanation. Nonetheless, the amount of linguistic diversity in the Aramaic witnesses of the seventh and sixth centuries BCE (Hug 1993; additions in Gzella 2015: pp. 112–119), after a period of coexistence of several reasonably standardized written forms of Aramaic in Syria (Gzella 2014, 2015: pp. 53–103), suggests a fairly low degree of conscious language policy and rather points to the role of highly mobile speakers, such as merchants and craftsmen, as a crucial factor for its success. Other reasons that have been suggested by scholars, but are hard to verify, include the practical advantages of the alphabetic script with its relatively small inventory of letter signs as opposed to syllabic cuneiform with which Akkadian was written; the adaptability of the language itself, thanks to its light and versatile grammatical core; and the relatively neutral ideological connotations of an idiom that was not the native tongue of the Assyrian conquerors. Aramaic would, at any rate, have facilitated access to the structurally similar languages of Syria-Palestina, which employed the same alphabetic writing system (see the overview in Gzella 2015: pp. 104–156). Linguistic similarity is known to foster trade and migration.

Achaemenid Aramaic (Gzella 2015: pp. 157–211), by contrast, bears the characteristic marks of an imperial chancery: script, spelling, morphology, syntax, lexicon, and idiom are much more unified than in the immediately preceding stage, presumably as a result of a large-scale administrative reorganization and unification under Darius I and Xerxes (Briant 2002: pp. 507–511). Hence, it constitutes a proper variety of Aramaic, to be distinguished on linguistic grounds both from the “Old Aramaic” material of the tenth to eighth centuries and from several other forms of Aramaic used during the seventh and sixth centuries. Yet inconsistent scholarly terminology obscures the linguistic boundaries: “Imperial Aramaic,” calqued after German *Reichsaramäisch*, originally referred to Achaemenid Aramaic but is now also often applied to Aramaic from the eighth century BCE on, and the same is true for “Official Aramaic.” So for clarity’s sake, the slightly cumbersome label “Achaemenid Official Aramaic” will be used here in order to avoid confusion with the Aramaic varieties current under Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian rule (cf. Gzella 2015: pp. 104–106, 157–159).

The prehistory of Achaemenid Official Aramaic remains mysterious, largely owing to the scanty amount of textual material immediately preceding the Achaemenid period, but a case can be made for the view that it is based on a subsequently deregionalized, otherwise unknown, local Aramaic dialect of Babylonia (Gzella 2008: pp. 96–100). One may assume that the bewilderingly complex dialect landscape of south and central Babylonia in Late Antiquity (cf. Khan 2007) has roots in a much older period; a rigorous large-scale reconstruction of the language situation in ancient Babylonia in light of medieval

and modern Aramaic material could perhaps shed further light on the origins of Achaemenid Official Aramaic. For the time being, one can point to a number of linguistic hallmarks that distinguish the Achaemenid chancery language from older Aramaic varieties (Gzella 2008: pp. 91–97; 2015: pp. 168–182). The most important of these include the very frequent spelling of long (“geminate”) consonants /CC/ with *nC* (e.g. *’nt* for /’attā/ ‘you’ instead of *’t*, as in older Aramaic), which points to a nasalized pronunciation of such consonants in the vernacular originally underlying Achaemenid Official Aramaic (e.g. [’ātā]) but seems to have been a purely orthographical device in the latter (because it targets sounds that are unlikely to be affected by nasalization, such as the voiced velar or uvular fricative written with the letter signs *q* or *ḡ*); a construction based on the passive participle with the agent expressed by a preposition, presumably calqued on Old Persian though still rarely attested in first-millennium BCE Aramaic (e.g. *šmy’ ly /šamī’ lī*/ “it was heard by me” for “I have heard”); the replacement of third-person plural suffixes marking a pronominal direct object with transitive verbs by independent pronouns (e.g. *l’ ytyt hmw* “I did not bring them”); and, perhaps, a merger of the third-person plural masculine and feminine forms in the “perfect” conjugation (e.g. *ktbw/katubū*/ “they wrote” with a feminine subject; however, proper forms of the third-person feminine plural, as in many other older Semitic languages, are only attested in post-Achaemenid Aramaic, so the diagnostic value of this feature remains unclear).

Since Aramaic had already been in use in many regions that were subsequently incorporated as provinces into the Persian Empire, the standard determined by the Achaemenid chancery interacted with local dialects and scribal practice. A certain degree of variation (mostly related to spelling) in the corpus shows that Achaemenid Official Aramaic, while being essentially uniform, was to some extent affected by local dialects and competing earlier written traditions of Aramaic. Nonetheless, it soon came to dominate scribal culture and eclipsed much of the diversity that the uncontrolled spread of Aramaic in the preceding period had brought about. A comparison between the letters in the archive of Aršama (or Arsames), the Persian satrap of Egypt (TAD A6.3–16), and the private letters on papyrus discovered at Hermopolis (TAD A2.1–7) provide a case in point. Whereas the former reflect Achaemenid Official Aramaic in its purest form, the latter are clearly composed in a distinct regional variety of Aramaic and contain a number of non-standard phonetic spellings as well as morphological and syntactic peculiarities but do exhibit a few traces of Achaemenid orthography (e.g. the writing of long consonants with *n*, as in one instance of *mnd’m* “whatever” instead of the spelling *md’m*, which is also employed) that was gradually encroaching on local scribal practice (Gzella 2011a: pp. 582–583, 2015: pp. 147–150). In addition, many Persian loanwords in the Aršama correspondence and their absence in the Hermopolis

papyri reinforce the difference between highly official and sub-standard Aramaic texts. The place of origin, the genre and register of a text, and the degree of formal education of a scribe thus constitute a complex interplay of factors that cause variation. However, attempts at identifying regional varieties within Achaemenid Aramaic proved unsuccessful, and the provenance of a text cannot be ascertained on linguistic grounds (see Gzella 2015: pp. 159–160).

Contact with other languages, too, left many traces in Achaemenid Aramaic, especially in the form of lexical loans. Some less obvious features, such as changes in word order including the frequent clause-final position of the verb, grammatical constructions, and sentence structure in general, may also result from the replication of foreign use patterns, although these are not yet well known. Multilingual scribes and interpreters in the homeland and in the provinces (Tavernier 2008: pp. 60–63 gives an overview of ancient sources referring to them) disseminated the results of such contact throughout the empire. Numerous Akkadian influences (Kaufman 1974) had entered the language already in preceding stages, but the Babylonian dialect of Akkadian continued to be used for certain official purposes in Babylonia, as is evidenced by economic documents. Borrowings from Persian (Muraoka and Porten 2003: pp. 342–345) first appear in Achaemenid times and often relate to the sphere of administration.

Individual words and expressions concerning everyday life have been taken over from local idioms; hence the Aramaic texts from Egypt contain a fair share of Egyptian lexemes, in particular naval terminology (Muraoka and Porten 2003: pp. 345–347). The situation in other parts of the empire is less well documented, but Aramaic and Elamite, which has a long and distinguished history of its own as an administrative language in the ancient kingdom of Elam, clearly coexisted in Persepolis. Moreover, multilingual inscriptions from Asia Minor with parallel versions in Lydian (from Sardis: KAI 260), Greek (from Limyra: KAI 262), or Lycian and Greek (from Xanthos: KAI 319) next to an Aramaic text prove that local idioms continued to be used even for public representation in some regions. It is likewise difficult to assess the impact of Achaemenid Official Aramaic on Syria-Palestine, the old homeland of the Aramaic language. Changes in the distributional pattern of the regional idioms as reflected by the epigraphic record suggest that Hebrew and the related dialects of the Transjordan area were increasingly marginalized or became confined to specific speech situations, such as religion in the case of Hebrew, and that Aramaic dominated many areas of daily life (Gzella 2015: pp. 190–193; 225–230). Phoenician inscriptions from Persian and Hellenistic times indicate, however, that this language preserved its local prestige and continued to be employed at least in monuments for public display. Yet it should be borne in mind that the limited written evidence does not

necessarily provide a representative view of the language situation as such and of the use of regional vernaculars. See Gzella (2011c) for a brief summary of the linguistic history of the region.

A recent grammatical outline of Achaemenid Aramaic proper against its linguistic background can be found in Gzella (2011a). Muraoka and Porten (2003) provide a full synchronic reference grammar of the material from Egypt, which forms but a part (albeit an important one) of the total evidence. A comprehensive modern reference grammar of Achaemenid Aramaic as such still has to be written. The entire lexicon is included, with full scholarly bibliography, in the standard dictionary by Hoftijzer and Jongeling (1995); the historical semantics and actual use of a large part of the vocabulary are discussed extensively in the various articles in Gzella (2016).

Documentary Texts

Most of the surviving material in Aramaic from Achaemenid times consists of letters, contracts, and economic documents; various smaller honorific, dedicatory, and funerary inscriptions; and short marks on seals, coins, and other items (see Gzella 2004: pp. 35–56 and 2015: pp. 182–208 for brief synopses). Longer texts were written on perishable material like papyrus or leather, so Egypt, thanks to its dry climate, is overrepresented in the available evidence. Obviously, not all Aramaic texts discovered in Egypt are of local provenance, but a large share of them, the so-called “Elephantine papyri,” illustrates daily life and the socioeconomic situation of a fifth-century BCE Judean diaspora community, established by mercenaries some time before (Grelot 1972: pp. 33–42), on the island Elephantine on the Nile. In addition, a collection of slave sales from the second half of the fourth century was found in Wadi Daliyeh near Samaria in Palestine. Inscriptions on durable material, by contrast, were discovered throughout the Achaemenid Empire: from Egypt, the Arabian Desert, Asia Minor, Palestine, Babylon, Persepolis, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. They all conform, to varying degrees, to the linguistic standard set by the Achaemenid administration, depending on their public or private character. In the absence of other criteria, a tentative date can often be established on grounds of paleography.

The Aramaic texts from Egypt until the Ptolemaic period have been collected and collated by Porten and Yardeni (1986–1999 = TAD, together with drawings, a translation into English and Modern Hebrew, and bibliographical references). Nonetheless, the respective first editions with their philological commentary and photographs must form part of any serious study. A selection of Aramaic papyri from Elephantine in an annotated translation is also available in Porten et al. (1996: pp. 74–276); the notes and introductory paragraphs

accompanying the French translation by Grelot (1972) are still quite serviceable, too. The Wadi Daliyeh papyri have been published by Gropp (2001) and, more recently in their entirety, by Dušek (2007). No such comprehensive collection exists for the inscriptions, but Schwiderski (2004, with an eclectic reading of the relevant texts, though without translation and notes) can be used as a point of departure and for bibliographical indications. Donner and Röllig (1966–2002 = KAI) give a representative selection of the most important pieces with a German translation and a philological commentary; other selections of a similar kind are less reliable. Fitzmyer and Kaufman (1992) provide an overview of older scholarly literature.

It is the use of Aramaic in domestic and provincial administration that best illustrates its role as an official language of the Achaemenid Empire. The large corpus of the mostly Elamite Fortification tablets from Persepolis, which record the assignment of food rations to persons affiliated in various ways with the royal palace, contains both texts with an Aramaic version and several hundreds of small tablets written in Aramaic alone. They do not lend themselves to easy access and remain unpublished to date (Azzoni 2008 gives a preliminary account). Some also refer to documents written on leather, the language of which, in all likelihood, was Aramaic, because the cuneiform script of Elamite, geared toward being inscribed with a stylus in wet clay, was unsuitable for being used with ink and on flat surfaces. Moreover, 163 mortars, pestles, and other stone objects discovered at the royal treasury bear short Aramaic inscriptions (Bowman 1970, whose erroneous interpretation as ritual texts has been abandoned in the meantime, see Naveh and Shaked 1973). The exact distribution of Aramaic and Elamite as administrative languages in Achaemenid Iran remains a matter of controversy, though, and cannot be easily explained on grounds of a sudden switch from Elamite to Aramaic alone. Tavernier (2008) has a useful synopsis of the current state of the discussion.

Evidence from top-level administration in other satrapies further contributes to understanding the role of Aramaic as an international language in the Achaemenid Empire, even if no complete satrapal archive has yet been discovered. Of particular importance are the 13 letters and fragments of Aršama (TAD A6.3–16; Driver 1965 and, for the photographs, 1954), who acted as the satrap of Egypt at the end of the fifth century BCE. They reflect the spelling conventions, epistolary phraseology, and procedural *mores* of the Persian chancery, although they are not predominantly concerned with the public sphere. Written on leather in a clear, authoritative, no-nonsense style and dispatched from the Achaemenid heartland to Egypt (presumably to his headquarters in Memphis, but the place of discovery remains unknown), they illustrate the way in which a leading Persian official instructed his managers to carry out their responsibilities and to look after his estates abroad. A few letters sent by his subordinates show how his orders flowed downward along the

chain of command. In addition, Aršama features in two letters found at Elephantine (TAD A6.1–2).

A likewise official usage of Aramaic is attested for other eastern and western provinces, even where Aramaic had no prior history as a spoken or written idiom. The correspondence of a local governor with the satrap of Bactria in the second half of the fourth century BCE, consisting of 30 letters on parchment, now makes the most substantial addition to the very meager textual evidence from outside Egypt and Iran (Naveh and Shaked 2012; discussed at greater length in Chapter 66 Bactria). From Daskyleion in Asia Minor, the residence of the satrap of Phrygia, 12 clay envelopes (*bullae*) with the (generally Iranian) names of their proprietors on Aramaic tags and seals have survived (Röllig 2002); they, too, bear witness to Aramaic letter-writing in provincial administration. Coins from Cilicia with Aramaic inscriptions (Vattioni 1971: pp. 70–78) and a trilingual stele (Aramaic, Lycian, Greek) issued by Pixodaros, the satrap of Lycia and Caria, in order to confirm the foundation of a new local cult at Xanthos in 337 BCE according to official Achaemenid procedure (recent bibliographical information is available in Funke 2008), also reinforce the use of the language in matters pertaining to the government.

The role of Aramaic in the communication of local authorities during the Achaemenid period is best attested for Egypt, chiefly thanks to the Elephantine papyri. These exhibit a higher degree of spelling variation, including some phonetic spellings, than, for example, the Aršama letters, which indicates that they were produced by Aramaic-speaking inhabitants. Topics of interest to a Judean expat group, at a time when Judaism began to take on its distinctive shape, surface in the 10 letters and fragments of the archive of Yedaniah, the son of Gemariah, the leader of the community during the end of the fifth century. Two versions of a rhetorically forceful letter seeking permission from the governor of Yehud to rebuild the local temple (TAD A4.7–8) are particularly famous, as is the memorandum of the governors of Yehud and Samaria granting this request (TAD A4.9). Both versions appear to be drafts, with some modifications, that have been preserved in the communal archive. Another letter, though highly fragmentary, is usually interpreted as an early reference to Passover, based on a reasonable yet not entirely certain reconstruction of the missing parts (TAD A4.1), and the others address various matters illustrating the sometimes-uneasy relations of the Judean community with the Egyptian population.

As a language of private law, too, Aramaic is particularly well attested in Achaemenid Egypt, where it coexisted with Demotic. The oldest datable legal text, a lease written in 515 BCE, originates from Korobis in the Nile Delta and reflects traces of a preceding Aramaic scribal tradition (TAB B1.1). The family archives of Mibtahiah (471–410 BCE; TAD B2.1–11) and of Ananiah

(456–402 BCE; TAD B3.1–13) contain bequests, marriage contracts, and property transactions. Twenty-one loose documents with deeds of obligation (TAD B4.1–7), conveyances (TAD B5.1–6), marriage documents (TAD B6.1–4), and judicial oaths (TAD B7.1–4) have also been discovered. They all mark the beginning of a long-lasting Aramaic legal tradition, with similar or even identical formulae recurring not only in the Hellenistic and Roman Near East but also in the Babylonian Talmud (Healey 2005; Gross 2008). Its origin in older Mesopotamian and West Semitic, local Egyptian, or perhaps even international Iranian law remains a matter of debate (see the introduction by Levine in Muffs 2003: pp. xi–xliv). The Egyptian evidence can now be supplemented by 27 fourth-century slave sales from Wadi Daliyeh in Palestine, which employ a slightly different phraseology (Gropp 2001; Dušek 2007).

In addition, 202 fifth- and fourth-century papyrus fragments relating to law, taxation, and commerce have been discovered at Saqqāra near Memphis (Segal 1983; nos. 8 and 35 have been re-edited in TAD B5.6 and 4.7 respectively). Unfortunately, they are so severely damaged that little reliable information can be derived from them, but they seem to emanate from non-Judean circles. The language exhibits a number of smaller peculiarities as opposed to other sub-corpora of Achaemenid Official Aramaic, yet their diagnostic value is, again, hard to assess. A number of court records (re-edited in TAD B8.1–4; 6–12) shed further light on the workings of legal procedures under Achaemenid administration in Egypt, despite the mostly minimal amount of text preserved, including complaints against a former verdict, cross-examination, oaths, and the decisions taken. About half of these cases concern slaves. Some Persian loans add to their official ring. The same site yields 26 ostraca, 21 of which are thought to be in Phoenician script.

Most economic texts from the provinces have been preserved on papyrus fragments and ostraca from Egypt, easily accessible in TAD C and D, as well as on Palestinian ostraca, especially some 2000 pieces from Idumaea, most of which record the transfer of goods (Porten and Yardeni 2014–2020). The latter in particular illustrate the well-entrenched employ of Aramaic also for base-level bookkeeping in a largely agrarian society. Papyrus was used for accounts (TAD C3.1–29) and lists (TAD C4.1–9; personal names of various provenances but of unknown function) that cover a longer period of time or were of more than ephemeral importance, whereas ostraca served for short-term purposes. The extensive customs account of import and export duties dating from 475 BCE and arranged by month (TAD C3.7), which was later erased and replaced by the Aḥiqar wisdom text (see below), is particularly revealing for the economic history of Achaemenid Egypt and Egypto-Aramaic naval terminology: duties were collected from incoming ships and deposited in the royal treasury (Lipiński 1994: pp. 62–67; Yardeni 1994). Information of a similar sort can be found in the poorly preserved Memphis Shipyard Journal (TAD C3.8) for the years 473–471 BCE.

Numerous texts from outside the administrative sphere show that Achaemenid Official Aramaic enjoyed a wide distribution in the Persian Empire: private letters on papyrus and ostraca; various types of stone inscriptions; property marks, seals, graffiti; and so forth. Short though they are, they bear witness to the growing distribution and impact of the orthographical and grammatical norm established by the royal chancery on the use of written language in daily life. The Hermopolis papyri (TAD A2.1–7) illustrate a tradition of Aramaic letter writing in Egypt that precedes the Achaemenid administration but gradually came under its influence; a similar situation may apply to other areas where such documentation is no longer available simply because the evidence has not been preserved. The majority of the short epistolary communications come from Elephantine and are written on ostraca; they generally concern matters of everyday economic life and often contain requests to dispatch certain goods (Lozachmeur 2006, a small part of which was previously published in TAD D; most of the 280 pieces in this collection are in Achaemenid Aramaic). Besides a few writing exercise tablets with the letters of the alphabet in a specific order (TAD D10.1–2; cf. 22.28), little information on the various degrees of literacy among the population in different regions and on the educational framework is available. The fact that people were presumably able to write their own names in clumsy letters does not exclude that many of them needed professional scribes for letters and other more advanced matters (Grelot 1972: pp. 48–56). The use of Aramaic for private representation surfaces in a number of dedicatory, funerary, and memorial inscriptions from Arabian Tayma, Asia Minor, and Palestine.

Literary Compositions

While documentary material constitutes the lion's share of the surviving sources, traces of a literary tradition in Aramaic during Achaemenid times can also be identified. Yet it is practically impossible to assess the true extent of this tradition and the role of non-documentary compositions in society: were they, or at least their general contents, known to significant parts of the population? Or was their use confined to scribal education, where they served as a medium of instruction (copying texts was a core activity in the training of Near Eastern scribes at various periods) and, perhaps, also as a model for stylistic imitation? Or did they form some common ground that defined the cultural self-awareness of the small elite of the Achaemenid mandarins, as did the Greek and Latin classics for generations of British civil servants? For the time being, such questions must remain unanswered.

Three texts on papyrus that can safely be subsumed under the category “literary,” in the broadest sense of the word, have been found at Elephantine

in Egypt. There is the story about Aḥiqar, an advisor to the Neo-Assyrian court who, thanks to his insight and personal integrity, survived a plot against him; a number of older traditional wisdom sayings ascribed to this sage were then attached to the narration (TAD C1.1). Another tale, about Bar Puneš (TAD C1.2), is so fragmentary that but little can be said about its contents except that it seems to take place at a royal court. And a fragmentary Aramaic version of the Bisotun inscription with the *res gestae* of Darius I (TAD C2.1; Greenfield and Porten 1982) has been translated from the Babylonian and supplements the Elamite, Old Persian, and Babylonian trilingual inscription gracing the famous rock monument in Media, as well as the Neo-Babylonian copy from Babylon. It is unclear whether Darius II had distributed a text celebrating the deeds of his predecessor throughout the empire in order to honor him (in accordance with §70 of the Persian original), or whether the copy discovered at Elephantine served as an exercise in scribal training. Since it closely corresponds to the orthographical and linguistic standards of Achaemenid Official Aramaic, it would, at any rate, have been a suitable model.

The origin of the Aḥiqar wisdom text is more difficult to trace, in particular because Aḥiqar was and is a well-known figure in Near Eastern literature up to the present day (Contini and Grottanelli 2005). Thanks to the underlying customs account (TAD C3.7), which is arranged chronologically, the original sequence of the surviving parts of the palimpsest can be determined (Gianto 1995: pp. 87–89). Apparently, the preceding narrative frame in Achaemenid Official Aramaic served as an introduction to the ensuing sayings; the latter are entrenched in older lore and composed in a pre-Achaemenid variety of Aramaic the provenance of which remains elusive (see Weigl 2010, with copious bibliographical references). Scholars are divided as to whether they were written in eighth- or seventh-century southern Syria or in seventh- or sixth-century (north-)western Mesopotamia (Weigl 2010: pp. 677–678; Gzella 2015: pp. 150–153), a question not easy to answer given the very limited attestation of Aramaic during that period. One could imagine that the Aḥiqar composition was used not only for teaching a formal style of Aramaic for administrators in the make (hence perhaps some archaic rings in the narrative) but also for depicting the moral and intellectual ideal of a loyal court official. The rich vocabulary and high amount of syntactic subordination show that the language of the proverbs is a literary idiom (see also Gzella 2017). Interestingly, Aḥiqar occurs on a fragmentary Demotic papyrus (Betrò 2005), and Bar Puneš may be identical to the well-known magician Hor-son-of-Puneš in Demotic literature, although the reading *ḥmr* in TAD C1.2 remains controversial (Gianto 1995: pp. 90–91). An ink inscription on the walls of a burial cave near Sheikh Fadl (TAD D23.1) may contain another literary composition from the Achaemenid

period, but it is so fragmentary and palaeographically so difficult that its contents cannot be clearly determined.

Despite these few surviving non-documentary sources in Aramaic dating from the former half of the first millennium, some vestiges of a broader literary tradition can be reconstructed in light of later evidence. However, such a supra-regional “Standard Literary Aramaic” did not exist alongside Achaemenid Official Aramaic (as Greenfield 1974, who coined the term, and others maintained) but formed a subset of it (Gzella 2008: pp. 108–109, 2015: p. 165). The roots of the Aramaic parts of the Books of Ezra and Daniel in the Achaemenid chancery idiom can still be determined, even if contact with the local Aramaic variety in Judaea and successive phases of redaction have left their traces in what might have been a fourth-century BCE core (Gzella 2004: pp. 41–45, 2015: pp. 205–208; on the linguistic peculiarities of Biblical Aramaic, see also Gzella 2011a: pp. 583–584). This idiom over time evolved into a local official language (“Hasmonaean”) that is attested in Aramaic religious compositions and legal documents from the Dead Sea (Gzella 2015: pp. 230–234). Scholars have also tried to identify poetic elements in non-literary genres like an Aramaic funerary inscription from Achaemenid Egypt (KAI 269 = TAD D20.5), now in Carpentras (cf. Nebe 2007: p. 74), but this remains somewhat speculative.

It is not unreasonable to assume that the spread of Achaemenid Official Aramaic and the consolidation of a longer-lasting institutional environment that upheld it created the backdrop for an Aramaic “world literature” to evolve. Although its true extent cannot be outlined, remains of an erstwhile common literary language still surface in various local traditions during the post-Achaemenid period and point to such a shared matrix. Court novels in particular, as in *Ahiqar*, *Daniel*, and some Qumran texts, constitute a genre closely associated with Aramaic (Gzella 2017). As a universal medium of expression, Aramaic could promote exchange of literary motives and figures between Egypt and Mesopotamia during the Achaemenid period. One can also suppose that knowledge of Mesopotamian science, glimpses of which appear in later writings, spread via lost Aramaic translations of technical writings (Ben-Dov 2010).

Aftermath

The Persian administration consolidated earlier networks between Aramaic-speaking regions throughout the empire and thus created a lasting heritage that outlived its chancery. By that time, Aramaic was deeply entrenched as a language of administration, law, and religious literature, which consolidated its long-term success. Once the central authority disappeared with Alexander’s conquest, elements of the official scribal tradition could interact more freely with regional forms of Aramaic, and linguistic innovations could spread more

easily across the speech area (see Gzella 2011b and, more extensively, 2015: pp. 212–280 for an overview). Although it quickly faded away in Anatolia and lasted only until the Ptolemaic period in Egypt, the use of Aramaic as a standardized written, though not necessarily spoken, language largely continued in the western and eastern peripheries of the dialect landscape, in the form of very conservative varieties in northern Arabia (especially Nabataean) and Parthia (scattered epigraphic material and Aramaic ideograms in Middle Persian). In Hellenistic-Roman Syria and eastern Mesopotamia (Palmyra, Edessa, Hatra), by contrast, several regional dialects of Aramaic were promoted to chancery idioms of small local kingdoms, yet were highly influenced by received spelling conventions. Judaea, finally, saw the gradual transformation of an Aramaic literary heritage into a new form of Jewish literary Aramaic between the fourth and the second centuries BCE. As a result, the end point of Achaemenid Official Aramaic is hard to determine. Aramaic still acted as a prestigious vehicle for reasserting local cultural self-awareness in Hellenistic and Roman times (Gzella 2006; Healey 2009: pp. 1–51) and subsequently produced a number of long-lasting religious literatures in Late Antiquity (Gzella 2015: pp. 281–381).

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CHAPTER 10

Biblical Sources

Reinhard G. Kratz

Epigraphical Sources

Epigraphical sources from Judah and Samaria in the period of the Achaemenid Empire are relatively rare (Stern 1982; Lemaire 2002b, 2007, 2015; Grabbe 2004: pp. 54–69). Taken together with the evidence from the Egyptian (Porten and Yardeni 1986–1999, quoted as TADAE) and Babylonian diaspora (Pearce 2006, 2011; Pearce and Wunsch 2014; Wunsch and Pearce forthcoming; see also Kratz 2015: pp. 136–153; Lemaire 2015: pp. 37–73), they allow for a spotlight on the political, economic, social, and religious-historical situation of Judaism during the Persian period and are therefore of special historical value.

Three kinds of epigraphical sources have come down to us from Judah and its vicinity in southern Palestine: stamp impressions (Avigad 1976; Ariel 2000; Lipschits and Vanderhooft 2011), coins (Meshorer 1982, 1990/91, 2001; Mildenberg 1988, 1996) and ostraca (see Lemaire 2002b, esp. Eph'al and Naveh 1996; Lemaire 1996, 2002a, 2006, 2007; Porten and Yardeni 2006; see also Kratz 2015: pp. 181–187; Lemaire 2015: pp. 86–98).

The inscribed stamps, bullae, and seals stem from the Judean economic life and are also attested for external trade (Lemaire 2002b: p. 217). Additionally, they shed light on the political structure (Carter 1999; Kratz 2004: pp. 93–106; Lemaire 2007). They suggest that Yehud was an independent administrative unit or even a province with a governor since the beginning of the

Achaemenid period. This conclusion is supported by the inscriptions *yh*, *yhd*, or *yhwd* designating the province, and *phw* designating the governor (Lipschits and Vanderhooft 2011: pp. 77–80). The personal names mentioned do not allow for a chronological order but provide us with a list of governors for the end of the sixth and the fifth century BCE. During the fourth century BCE Bagoas/Bagohi was governor, followed by Yeheziah; one is attested in the papyri from Elephantine (TADAE A4.7–8 and A4.9) the other on Judean coins (Meshorer 2001: pp. 15–16; Lemaire 2015: p. 95). Both of them were contemporaries of Sanballat and his sons as well as a Hananiah in Samaria (see below). In analogy to Samaria and Elephantine one would expect that the administrative center of Yehud had the status of a “fortress,” but this is attested only in literary sources for Jerusalem (Neh 2:8; 7:2). The papyri of Elephantine mention the “high priest and his colleagues, the priests who are in Jerusalem” (*khn' rb' wknwth khny' zy byrwšlm*) as well the “nobles of the Judeans” (*hry yhwdy'*) as further officials in Yehud (TADAE A4.7–8; cf. Neh 2:16–18).

The coins provide valuable information about the monetary system during the fourth century BCE and the various cultural influences that manifest themselves in the minting. Amongst those coins two specimens are of special significance as they shed some light on the order of high priests in Jerusalem. Two, if not three, high priests are attested epigraphically: Yohanan (I.) mentioned in the papyri from Elephantine around 400 BCE (TADAE A4.7–8; cf. Neh 12:22); his son and successor Jaddua, who appears on a Judean coin from the second half of the fourth century BCE (Spaer 1986/7; cf. Neh 12:11.22); and Yohanan (II?) on a further Judean coin from the end of the Persian period (Barag 1986/7; Meshorer 2001: p. 14), who is most likely to be identified with Onias I. (Josephus, Ant. 11.347; for a different view, see Lemaire 2015: pp. 94–95, who – following L. Fried – identifies this one with Yohanan I). In light of the epigraphic evidence, taking into account the possibility of longer periods of office, the list in Neh 12:10f., 22.26 appears to be complete (Vanderkam 1991; Kratz 2004: pp. 106–111; Dušek 2007: pp. 549–591). A coin depicting a deity on a winged wheel is of special religious-historical importance (Meshorer 1982: pp. 21–30); the identification of the deity, however, is disputed (Grabbe 2004: pp. 66–67; Lemaire 2015: p. 93).

The ostraca inform us about the economic situation in Judah and in its vicinity in southern Palestine (Lemaire 2015: pp. 98–122). In addition, they contain a plethora of personal names that help to decipher the ethnic makeup of the population as well as the religious plurality. The theophorous element in the Judean onomasticon seems to be limited to EL and YH/YHW = biblical Yhwh (Lemaire 2002b: p. 217). We also have Aramaic, Phoenician, Edomite, and Arabian personal and divine names (Lemaire 2002b: pp. 224–226;

Porten and Yardeni 2006; Kloner and Stern 2007; E. Eshel 2007). In this context an ostrakon that mentions the sanctuaries of three deities is of special interest: “House (i.e. Temple) of ‘Uzza,” “House of Yahu,” and “House of Nabu” (Lemaire 2002a Nr. 283; cf. Lemaire 2001, 2006: pp. 416–417; 2015: pp. 118–119). Apparently the cultic worship of the Judean-Samaritan deity Yahu was not limited to the “place that Yhwh will chose” (Deut. 12) during the fourth century BCE. The historical constellation represented in the epigraphic material appears not to differ from the one of the Judeans at Elephantine (Kratz 2006, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2013, 2015; Becking 2011: pp. 128–142) or from the (Israelite) worshippers of Yhwh in the Province of Samaria.

At Wadi Daliyeh, 14 km north of Jericho, excavations have yielded – besides several human skeletons – Aramaic papyri, clay bullae, and coins from Samaria (Leith 1997; Gropp 2001; Dušek 2007; Kratz 2015: pp. 165–181; Lemaire 2015: pp. 75–86; on Samaria see also Zengellér 2011; Frey, Schattner-Rieser, and Schmid 2012; Knoppers 2013; Hensel 2016). How this material arrived at its place of discovery we do not know. It is commonly presumed that refugees transported the material there when they had to flee from the city of Samaria after the failed uprising against Andromachos, the prefect of Alexander the Great. The papyri are not very well preserved but due to their formulaic character they can be fairly well reconstructed. The material stems from the fourth century BCE and more precisely from the time of Artaxerxes II to Darius III. The coins discovered in various places of the Province of Samaria can be dated to the same period (Meshorer and Qedar 1991, 1999; Mildenberg 1996). The papyri are private deeds that first and foremost deal with the selling of slaves, but there is also the deed of a house sale and receipts for the repayment of a loan; in one case we may even have the minutes of a legal dispute. The clay bullae and coins are of interest because of their iconography. Here too, the minting shows different (Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Persian, and Greek) cultural influences and motifs, amongst them representations of deities and naked men. Especially significant is a coin that shows a portrait and inscription of the god Zeus on one side and has a Yahwistic name on the reverse (Lemaire 2002b: p. 223; 2015: pp. 81–82). The rededication of the two temples of Yhwh on Mt. Gerizim and in Jerusalem to sanctuaries of Zeus under Antiochus IV obviously fell on fertile ground.

The onomasticon of the papyri from Samaria as well as of the inscribed bullae and coins attests a similar picture (Lemaire 2002b: pp. 221–222; Dušek 2007: pp. 486–495). Here we have – especially amongst the owners, contractual partners, and slaves – mostly Israelite-Judean names; next to them and especially amongst the witnesses for the deeds and the officials there exists a plethora of Aramaic, Phoenician, Edomite, Akkadian, and Persian names.

Being aware of the problems and pitfalls of the interpretation of such findings we can, nevertheless, say that the situation is reminiscent of the situation in Judah and Elephantine and implies the same historical constellation: we learn of a coexistence and cooperation of several ethnicities within the political structures of the Persian Empire. These ethnicities do not define their identity by a strict separation from each other; rather, they live side by side while at the same time ensuring their own identity. An influence of biblical norms on daily life, for example in matters of slave trade or ethnic separation, cannot be detected in the preserved documents.

The political structure, too, reflected in the epigraphic material reminds us of its Judean neighbors and of Elephantine. The name Samaria is attested in its long form (*šmr̄yn/šmr̄n*) as well as in abbreviations (*šmr̄*, *šm*, *šn*, *š*). The Persian satrapy of Transeuphrates is the superordinated political unit. Its satrap Mazaios/Masdaj is mentioned by its full name or in abbreviated form (*mz*) on coins: “Mazday who resides over Ebir-nari and Cilicia” (*mzdy zy ʿl ʿbr nhr̄a wḥlk*). Samaria itself had the status of a province (*šmr̄yn mdyntʾ*) and was ruled by a governor (*ph̄t šmr̄yn/šmr̄n*). The capital is called a “fortress” (*šmr̄yn byrtʾ*). In accordance to this terminology, the papyri are written “in the fortress Samaria (that is) in the Province of Samaria.” Coins mention a prefect (*sgnʾ*) and judges (*dynʾ*) as subordinate officials. In addition we have several names without a title; here we can assume that they belong to further administrative officers who had the right to mint coins, amongst them maybe even priests as they belong to the ruling elite of a “fortress” – both in the Province of Yehud and in Elephantine.

The direct historical contact with the Judean “fortress Yeb” (Elephantine) is established by the figure of Sanballat, the governor of Samaria who is mentioned in the epigraphic material from Samaria as well as in the papyri from Elephantine. In both cases his sons are mentioned too as they either represent their father or succeeded him in office. There is one son with a Yahwistic name attested on a seal from Samaria (WD 22). Then we have the two sons called Delaiah and Shelemiah in the papyri from Elephantine where they were involved in the rebuilding of the temple in Elephantine (TADAE A4.7–8 and A4.9); they may also be represented by the abbreviations *dl* and *šl* on Samaritan coins. One of the Samaritan papyri from the year 354 BCE also mentions a governor called Hananiah. This attestation helps to reconstruct the list of the governors of Samaria from Darius II down to Darius III: Sanballat and his sons Delaiah, Shelemiah and [?]YHW (Delayahu?) in the first half and Hananiah in the second half of the fourth century BCE. The common assumption of two or three governors bearing the same name – an assumption trying to harmonize the epigraphic material with the account of Nehemiah (Neh. 2:10.19, etc.) and Josephus (AJ 11.302–303) – is superfluous (Kratz 2004: pp. 93–106; Dušek 2007: pp. 516–549, 2012a; followed by Lemaire 2015: p. 83).

To complete the picture let us mention in passing a further corpus of inscriptions, namely Aramaic and Hebrew votive inscriptions discovered on Mt. Gerizim. According to the excavators these inscriptions could date back to the fifth and fourth centuries BCE (Magen Misgav, and Tsfania 2004; Magen 2008: pp. 227–242) but they appear more likely to be products of Hellenistic times (Dušek 2012b; De Hemmer Gudme 2013). They are, nevertheless, relevant for the Persian period as they refer to a temple already founded in the fifth century BCE that was the central sanctuary of the worshippers of Yhwh in the Province of Samaria (Magen 2008). Like the persons whom we know from the material from Wadi Daliyeh and from the coins who bear Yahwistic names, so the Yhwh worshippers from Mt. Gerizim were “Samaritans” or “Samaritans.” This label – like “Judeans” in the Province of Yehud or in Elephantine – is nothing more than a local, political, and ethnic attribute. In Hellenistic times these Samaritan Yahwists occasionally called themselves “Israelites” (*Delos*) and accepted the Pentateuch, the Torah of Moses, as their holy scripture. Whether this was already the case during the Persian period is a historical problem yet to be solved (Knoppers 2006; Kratz 2007, 2015; Dušek 2012b: pp. 65–118), as is the relationship of the Yahwists represented in the inscriptions from Mt. Gerizim to the Yahwists known to us from epigraphic material of the Achaemenid period.

Literary Sources

Literary sources that are attested archeologically in the Achaemenid period are only known to us from Elephantine: Here we have the “Words of Ahiqar” and an Aramaic version of the Bisitun inscription (TADAE C1.1 and C2). Otherwise we have to rely entirely on the biblical tradition and on the tradition dependent on it, such as the *Jewish Antiquities* of Flavius Josephus.

In contrast to the literary works from Elephantine that fit well into the picture reflected by the epigraphic material, the biblical tradition contains a series of particularities. On the one hand, it presupposes the situation reflected in the epigraphic material, and the Bible sometimes even contains information – especially names and individual dates or even literary pieces – that can be aligned with the archeological findings. On the other hand, in its vast majority the biblical tradition has little to do with the epigraphic material and should not be harmonized with it hastily (Edelman 2012). Rather, the Bible seems to be highly critical toward the historical situation and even rejects it by creating its own religious counter-world, a world that centers on the Torah of Moses and/or the biblical prophets (Kratz 2004: pp. 93–119, 2015).

In a way the biblical writings are timeless. Apart from a *terminus a quo* if it is mentioned in a writing and the *terminus ad quem* of the biblical manuscripts

from Qumran, that begin in the third century BCE, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to offer exact dates for a biblical text or to verify the historicity of the biblical statements and to reconstruct from them the history of Israel during the Persian period (Galling 1964; Williamson 2004). The historical evaluation of the biblical sources has to take all these factors into account and makes a literary-critical analysis as well as an analysis of the *Tendenz* of text mandatory. Here, one has to accept that one will hardly ever reach beyond a well (or less well) argued hypothesis.

Within the biblical tradition we have to distinguish between writings that are set in the Persian period but not necessarily written during this period and those texts of which scholarship assumes that they were composed in Persian times even though Persia is not mentioned in them. The historical narratives in (2 Chron. 36) Ezra–Nehemiah, 1 Esdras and Esther as well as the prophecies in Isaiah 44–45, Haggai, Zechariah, and Daniel can be counted to the first group. In these writings the roughly 200 years of Persian rule over Judah and Samaria are condensed to three – if we add Esther, four – events: (i) the end of the Babylonian exile and the rebuilding of the temple under Cyrus and Darius (2 Chron. 36; Ezra 1–6 and 1 Esd.; Isa 44:28–45:13; Hag.; Zech. 1–8; Dan. 1:6 and 8–11); (ii) the mission of Ezra under Artaxerxes (Ezra 7–10; Neh. 8; 1 Esd.); (iii) the mission of Nehemiah under Artaxerxes (Neh. 1–13); (iv) the rescue of the Jewish people under Xerxes (Esther).

In two cases the biblical tradition has a point of reference in history: the rebuilding of the second temple and the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. Two – possibly authentic – prophetic oracles from the time of the reconstruction of the temple have come down to us and are now incorporated into the book of Haggai: Hag 1:1.4.8 and 1:15–2:1.3.9a. Both oracles are dated according to the ruling king Darius and call for the beginning of the building activity. Scholars generally identify this king with Darius I but there are dissenting voices that place the building of the temple during the time of Darius II (Dequeker 1993) or Artaxerxes I (Edelman 2005). The two oracles were gradually supplemented within the book of Haggai and joined with the visions of Zechariah that are only secondarily connected with the temple. Both prophetic books contain some Persian flavor, but we cannot derive reliable historical information from them. Even the role of Serubbabel and Joshua remains unclear as they both appear only in secondary, i.e. later, passages (Kratz 2004; Hallaschka 2011). The same has to be said of the figure of Sheshbazzar, who is mentioned only in Ezra 1:7–11 and Ezra 5:14–16 (6:5?) and who cannot be placed historically (Kratz 2004: pp. 101–102, 105–106).

The oracles in Isaiah 44–45 (Kratz 1991a), the narrative in Ezra 1–6 and 1 Esdras (Kratz 2000: pp. 56–67), as well as the literary reflexes on the beginnings of Persian rule in the book of Daniel (Kratz 1991b), have to be seen as later literary creations that have little historical value. A comparison of the

Aramaic narrative in Ezra 5–6 – which is the literary nucleus of Ezra 1–6 where we find the older variant of the two versions of the famous edict of Cyrus (Ezra 1,1–4; 6,1–5) – with the papyri from Elephantine shows that this narrative appears to work with general historical knowledge and contains quite a bit of the flavor of the time. This, however, does not imply that the material has to be regarded as historical. Rather, Ezra 5–6 are written in the spirit of the biblical tradition and they are indebted to the Chronistic view of history (Kratz 2006).

The mission of Nehemiah, too, has a concrete historical anchor: the building of the walls of Jerusalem (Kratz 2000: pp. 68–74, 2004: pp. 93–106; Wright 2004). The original building report is a short first-person narrative: Neh. 1:1a,11b; 2:1–6,11–18; 3:38; 6:15. The mission is commonly dated to the year 445 BCE, the 20th year of Artaxerxes I. The reason for this dating is the figure of Sanballat, governor of Samaria, who is mentioned not only in the papyri from Elephantine for the time around 410 BCE but also in the book of Nehemiah. This dating, however, is not certain as Sanballat does not appear in the original building report. On the other hand, the building of the walls fits well with Persian policy of the fifth century (Hoglund 1992; Carter 1999; Lipschits 2006, 2012) as it would transform Jerusalem into a fortified garrison and possibly also into the capital of the Province of Yehud. Nehemiah reminds one of the ambassador Hananiah who is mentioned in the papyri from Elephantine (Kratz 2009). All the other passages of the book of Nehemiah, including those designating Nehemiah as “governor” (Neh. 5:14–19; 12:26), are secondary literary supplements that were added to the building report in order to integrate Nehemiah into the (biblical) sacred history of the people of Israel, i.e. the people of God. Their historical appraisal stands on very shaky ground.

The evaluation of the mission of Ezra, reported in Ezra 7–10 and Neh 8–10, is most difficult (Kratz 2000: pp. 74–90, 2004: pp. 111–118, 2008). His mission too is dated to the reign of a king called Artaxerxes. Scholarship generally identifies this king with Artaxerxes II since Nehemiah does not seem to presuppose Ezra. Such a dating operates on the premise that the Ezra memoir existed independently and is historical. This approach blends the historical and literary levels of the narrative. The historical fiction of the biblical tradition emphasizes that the same Artaxerxes is meant here. Ezra and Nehemiah are supposed to be contemporaries in order to complete the restitution of the people of Israel in the Province of Judah in accordance with the Mosaic law (Willi 1995). Only in literary-historical terms Ezra is younger than Nehemiah.

Historically, however, we can say little about Ezra. The Aramaic rescript in Ezra 7 forms the literary kernel of the Ezra narrative: Apart from bringing donations to Judah, Ezra is ordered to ensure the execution of the law (*dat*)

of the Jewish God, that is identical to the law (*dat*) of the king, in the territory of Transeuphrates. The Hebrew narrative in which Ezra executes this order (Ezra 8–10; Neh. 8–10) is dependent on this rescript. The authenticity of the Aramaic rescript that once again is a mixture of Persian period flavor and biblical topoi continues to be disputed since the time of Eduard Meyer and Julius Wellhausen (Kratz 2004: pp. 6–22). Despite the ongoing debate the authenticity is unlikely (Schwiderski 2000; Grätz 2004). The text reads like a foundation legend of the legal status of the Torah of Moses in Judaism and is comparable to the Letter of Aristeas reporting the origin of the Greek translation of the Torah in Alexandria under Ptolemy II. The historical background of the Ezra legend is probably the experience of the growing dissemination of the Torah as binding commitment in Judah and Samaria; this dissemination possibly started during the Persian period but came to full effect only in Hellenistic times. During the same period 1 Esdras, an epitome of 2 Chr 35–36 + Ezra–Nehemiah in Greek was written; here Nehemiah is missing and the mission of Ezra forms – after the rebuilding of the temple – the culmination. This version of the Ezra material is also the basis for Josephus in *Ant.* 11.1–158. 4Ezra then – written after 70 CE – represents an even later reception of the figure of Ezra (Kratz 2008).

The Book of Esther, too, is a legend that grew over a longer period. It has come down to us in two different versions, a Greek and a Hebrew one (Clines 1984; Fox 1991; Jobes 1996). The book relates the story of a pogrom against the Jewish people and closes with the establishment of the festival of Purim. The king mentioned in Est 1:1 shall be identified with Xerxes I so that the fictitious story line is situated after the building of the temple (Darius I) and before Ezra and Nehemiah (Artaxerxes I). Links to these events, however, are not to be found in Esther. The book of Esther displays an extraordinary familiarity with details of the Persian court – commentaries generally quote the corresponding parallels from Herodotus and Xenophon. This general knowledge is supplemented with all kinds of fantastic details such as the marriage of the Xerxes to the Jewess Esther and woven into a narrative that portraits – in recourse to the biblical tradition – the situation of the Jews in the eastern diaspora (Hagedorn 2011).

Not the events are historical but the general experience that is used as incident and cause for the foundation of a festival tradition. The narrative focuses on the experience of localized hostility against and persecution of members of the Jewish people that sometimes happened in the diaspora and that will serve as the cornerstone for the hatred of the Jews in Antiquity. An authentic example of such an experience is the destruction of the Judean Temple of Yahu on Elephantine – an event that served as the point of departure for the formation of legends about the past under Cambyses (TADAE A4.7–8). The book of Esther is an instructive example that one should not use the flavor of a time to

argue for the historicity of the events narrated or to deduce from it a date for the literary origin of the story. The example of Esther should also be used in the interpretation of Ezra-Nehemiah. In both cases the Greek versions (1Esdr. and Greek Esther) show that the legends about Israelites and Judeans during the Persian period – legends on which the self-understanding of Judaism rests – were still relevant during Hellenistic times and were spun out further.

Next to the biblical sources that are set explicitly in the Persian period, scholarship generally dates several other writings or parts of biblical books to this period (Grabbe 2004: pp. 90–106). From the plethora of the material we will simply look at one (significant) example: the completion of the Jewish law in the form of the Pentateuch, the Torah of Moses, a document of which more than half was written or composed in the post-monarchial period, i.e. during neo-Babylonian, Persian, and Hellenistic times (Kratz 2000, 2015). Especially the multiple-layered literary stratum, commonly called “Priestly Writing” (Kratz 2000: pp. 102–117, 226–248), is best explained in reference to the second temple period.

The literary development has been interpreted as a compromise (Blum 1990; Nihan 2007) between several rival groups within Israel (Deuteronomy/Priestly Writing; Golah/Land; Samaria/Judah) – a compromise prompted by an initiative of the Persian authorities or as part of the Persian legal practice called imperial authorization (Frei 1996; on Frei’s thesis see Watts 2001; Knoppers and Levinson 2007). The historical hypothesis lacks any evidence and cannot be supported by the texts themselves. The literary development is undeniable but it can be shown only in a relative chronology of the literary strata. It is further undeniable that we have Pentateuchal manuscripts amongst the Dead Sea Scrolls, which attest for the period around the middle of the third century BCE several different versions of the texts, including the proto-Samaritan version (Dušek 2012b: pp. 85–96). To this evidence we have to add the Septuagint that attests the dissemination of the Pentateuch amongst the Greek-speaking Jews in Alexandria, and Ben Sira, who canvasses the biblical tradition around 200 BCE in Judah. However, which circles were responsible for the production and tradition of the Hebrew Pentateuchal manuscripts or for the Greek translation of the Torah remains – apart from the ancient legends (Ezra 7; Neh. 8; Letter of Aristeas Judaeus; Joseph) – unclear. It is equally unclear in which circles these documents were copied, studied, and adhered to and what status the Torah had in Samaria (Mt. Gerizim), Judah (Jerusalem), and Alexandria during the Persian and early Hellenistic period (Kratz 2007, 2010, 2013, 2015).

We have to admit that we know far less about the history and status of the Pentateuch as Torah during the Persian period than we would like to and we are forced to rely on speculation. The Maccabean revolt during the reign of Antiochus IV during the middle of the second century BCE may provide a

historical starting point. Here the Torah is no longer a document of marginalized groups such as the religious community from Qumran but has started to play a significant role in the quarrel over political and economic influence between rival groups within Judaism. During the reign of the Hasmoneans it became (for the first time?) a political and legally binding document for entire Judaism. This is, however, a different story for which we would have to assess the sources for the Hellenistic period.

NOTE

- 1 English translation Anselm C. Hagedorn (Berlin). This manuscript was completed in 2012, the literature was updated in 2017.

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- Lemaire, A. (2015). *Levantine Epigraphy and History in the Achaemenid Period (539–333 bce)*, The Schweich Lectures of the British Academy 2013. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Gives a thorough overview of the epigraphical material.
- Dušek, J. (2007). *Les manuscrits araméens du Wadi Daliyeh et la Samarie vers 450–332 av. J.-C.*, Culture and History of the Ancient Near East 30. Leiden: Brill. Offers an excellent new edition of the Samaritan material and brilliant historical evaluations in the context of the Samaritan as well as the Judean history.
- Dušek, J. (2012). *Aramaic and Hebrew Inscriptions from Mt. Gerizim and Samaria between Antiochus III and Antiochus IV Epiphanes*, Culture and History of the Ancient Near East 54. Leiden: Brill. Offers another excellent new edition of the Samaritan material and brilliant historical evaluations in the context of the Samaritan as well as the Judean history.
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- Grätz, S. (2004). *Das Edikt des Artaxerxes. Eine Untersuchung zum religionspolitischen und historischen Umfeld von Esra 7, 12–26*, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 337. Berlin, New York: de Gruyter. Provides an excellent analysis of the book of Ezra.
- Wright, J.L. (2004). *Rebuilding Identity: The Nehemiah-Memoir and its Earliest Readers*, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 348. Berlin, New York: de Gruyter. Provides an excellent analysis of the book of Nehemiah.
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- Four volumes of collected articles on Judaism in the Achaemenid period:
- Galling, K. (1964). *Studien zur Geschichte Israels im persischen Zeitalter*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck. Offers deep and lucid historical investigations on Judaism in the Achaemenid period.
- Williamson, H.G.M. (2004). *Studies in Persian Period History and Historiography (Forschungen zum Alten Testament 38)*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck. Offers brilliant studies on history and historiography.
- Kratz, R.G. (2004). *Das Judentum im Zeitalter des Zweiten Tempels*, Forschungen zum Alten Testament 42; study ed. 2006; 2nd ed. 2013. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck. Provides articles on history and tradition.
- Becking, B. (2011). *Ezra, Nehemiah, and the Construction of Early Jewish Identity*, Forschungen zum Alten Testament 80. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck. Concentrates mainly on Ezra-Nehemiah and the question of Judaeic or Jewish identity.

CHAPTER 11

Phoenician Sources

Josette Elayi

It is paradoxical that the Phoenicians who invented the alphabet have left relatively few inscriptions, compared with the Greeks for example. However, we know from the historian Flavius Josephus (see Chapter 14 Greek and Latin Sources) that Tyre used to write annals of the main events, as other cities probably did. In fact, hundreds of Phoenician inscriptions dated from the Persian period have been discovered, but most of them are very short. Monumental inscriptions are not frequent, on the one hand because many stones from ancient Lebanese sites have disappeared in lime-kilns, on the other hand because the Phoenicians probably used to write on perishable supports, not preserved due to humid and salty soils. The main difficulty in consulting Phoenician inscriptions is the absence of a global corpus. Only partial corpuses exist for some categories of inscriptions and most Phoenician inscriptions are scattered in various publications or remain unpublished (Donner and Röllig 1973: pp. 10–62; Gibson 1982: pp. 93–141; Elayi and Sapin 2000: pp. 113–123, 363–366, 463–465, 609–611, 689–690; Pisano and Travaglini 2003: pp. 59–79).¹

The Inscriptions of the Four Main Phoenician Cities

Sidonian inscriptions are the most numerous, about 100. The longest (22 lines) is the funeral inscription carved on the sarcophagus of King Eshmunazor II, an important historical inscription, dated about 550–525

A Companion to the Achaemenid Persian Empire, Volume I, First Edition.

Edited by Bruno Jacobs and Robert Rollinger.

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BCE (Elayi 1989: pp. 37–79). The funeral inscription of his father, King Tabnit, is slightly earlier. More than 25 foundation inscriptions of King Bodashtart were discovered in the Eshmun temple near Sidon, dated about 525–500 BCE (Bonnet and Xella 2000: pp. 93–104). Bodashtart also made an inscription for inaugurating the Saltani channel (Xella and Zamora 2004: pp. 273–300). Among several votive inscriptions, the inscription of King Baalshillem II gives his royal genealogy: Baalshillem I, Abdamon, Baana, and Baalshillem II (Stucky 2005: pp. 273–318). Monetary inscriptions must not be neglected because they are very useful for history and chronology. They give the kings' abbreviated names and their yearly dating between 401 and 333 provides the dates of the reigns: Baalshillem II (401–366), Abdashtart I (365–352), Tennes (351–347), Evagoras (?) (346–343), and Abdashtart II (342–333) (Elayi and Elayi 2004: pp. 437–470; Elayi 2006: pp. 14–21). Other Sidonian inscriptions are ostraca, magical squares, workshop marks, and graffiti.

There are approximately 50 Tyrian inscriptions, but almost all of them are very short. Among the votive and funeral inscriptions, one dated about 532 BCE possibly gives the names of the kings Hiram III and Ittobaal IV, another mentions the “chief of the hundred,” and two written in Punic on stelae are related to Carthago's sons (Sader 2005: pp. 80–84). The monetary inscriptions give the abbreviated names of some kings such as Ozmilk, who reigned from about 349 to 333 BCE (Elayi and Elayi 2009: pp. 221–252; Elayi 2006: pp. 21–25). Other Tyrian inscriptions are inscribed on gold, lapis-lazuli, and bronze amulets, tokens, bullae, fiscal, and personal seals (Lozachmeur and Pezin 1994: pp. 361–371; Bordreuil 1986: pp. 82–86; Sader 1990: pp. 318–321).

For Byblos, about 30 inscriptions have been published. Three are funeral inscriptions for King Shipitbaal III's son dated about 500 BCE, for an anonymous king dated about 400 BCE, and for Batnoam, King Ozbaal's mother, in about 400 BCE. The most important one is the votive inscription of King Yehawmilk dated about 450 BCE (Elayi 2009: pp. 14–23). The monetary inscriptions provide the names of four kings: Elpaal, Ozbaal, Urimilk, and Aynel. A magic inscription on a silver amulet possibly gives the name of King Shipitbaal III (Lemaire 2003: pp. 155–174). Other Byblian inscriptions are carved on statues, pottery, and seals.

The inscriptions of Arwad, Amrit, and Tartous opposite the island are still less numerous. Some inscriptions from the sanctuary of Amrit (Maabed) are devoted to the healing god (Puech 1986: pp. 327–342). The monetary inscriptions give the abbreviated names of some kings such as Gerashtart, who reigned from 339 to at least 333 BCE (Elayi 2007: pp. 99–104). Lead weights from Arwad, Amrit, and Tartous bear some short inscriptions of values, useful for metrology (Elayi and Elayi 1997: pp. 155–181).

Other Inscriptions from the Levantine Seashore

With the exception of Amrit and Tartous inscriptions, the Phoenician inscriptions are rare and very short in northern Phoenicia, at Al Mina, Ras el-Bassit, Ras Shamra, Tell Kazel (ancient Simyra), and the Nahr el-Barid. About 20 short inscriptions were discovered in Beirut, mainly ostraca, graffiti, and weights (Sader 1998: pp. 203–213). Several inscriptions come from the excavations of Sarafand (ancient Sarepta): a letter, an abecedary, seals, and votive inscriptions, one of them inscribed on an ivory tablet dedicated to Tanit-Ashtart. Not far from Sarepta, at Kharayeb, another votive inscription on a statue was found.

In southern Phoenicia, many inscriptions were discovered during an extensive archaeological exploration. However, almost all of them are short and not very significant (Delavault and Lemaire 1979: pp. 1–37; Lemaire 2000: pp. 97–113). Some very short inscriptions on ceramics were found in Tell Keisan and a fiscal seal is related with this area. Some ostraca come from Akko, one of them mentioning the order given by the political power to the metal workers to make 302 cultic vessels for the temple. Several short inscriptions on jars, ostraca, graffiti, personal, and fiscal seals were discovered in Tell Abu Hawam, Haifa, Shiqmona, and Atlit. Ostraca from Dor mention the name of an official from Sidon and a list of agricultural tools. Coming from the area of Elyakhin in the Sharon plain, metallic bowls bear several votive inscriptions. Some short inscriptions were found in Apollonia-Arsuf, Tel Michal, Jaffa, Ashkelon, and Gaza: inscriptions on jars, ostraca, graffiti, and weights.

Inscriptions from Cyprus

Many inscriptions, some of them very important, were found in all areas of the island of Cyprus, which was part of the Persian Empire. The most significant are the economical archives of the palace of Idalion, most of them still unpublished. It is the only existing epigraphic source for the Phoenician economy. There are at least 270 Phoenician inscriptions: gypsum tablets, ostraca, and “labels” (Sznycer 2004: pp. 86–100). The 156 inscriptions found in Larnaka (ancient Kition) are published: funeral and votive inscriptions, ostraca, inscriptions on pottery, and mainly temple tariffs (Amadasi and Karageorghis 1977: pp. 11–189). A votive inscription from Larnaka-tis-Lapithou (ancient Lapethos), carved on a marble stone, is dated between 345 and 315 BCE, possibly under the reign of King Praxippos II. Another votive inscription from Lapethos, dated from the fourth century, is bilingual (Phoenician and Greek). A commemorative inscription of Milkyaton, king of Kition and Idalion, found in Tamassos, gives information on a victory against the Paphians in 392/391 BCE. A sarcophagus bears the inscription of Eshmunadon, governor of Tyre,

dated from the fourth century. Various other inscriptions, in general short, come from Vouni, Kourion, Alassa, Ayia Irini, Athienou (Golgoi), Pergamos, and Salamis (Masson and Szzyrmer 1972: pp. 86–128).

Other Inscriptions from the Persian Empire

In the other parts of the Persian Empire, the Phoenician inscriptions are much less numerous. In Syria, inscribed weights come from Homs and a short inscription dated from the fourth century was found in Karkemish. In Israel, ostraca, bullae, short inscriptions, and stamps on pottery were found in Hazor, Khirbet el-Kom, Wadi Daliyeh, and Sichem. A bronze situla from Har Mispheh Yamim bears a votive inscription to Ashtart. The ostraca of Tell el-Kheleifeh near Elat testify to Phoenician trade in the Red Sea during the Persian period. Small Phoenician inscriptions were also discovered in Egypt: in Memphis, Tell el-Maskhuta, Abusir, and Elephantine.

There are several inscriptions which originate from antiquities markets whose provenance is unknown. Some Phoenician inscriptions dated from the Persian period were also found outside the Persian Empire, in the Greek world and in the western Mediterranean. In the Near East, the great number of inscriptions dated from the Persian period shows that writing was widespread during this period, and not only reserved for professional scribes. The graffiti on pottery and coins were made by anybody who had an appropriate writing tool available. Most of the inscriptions are engraved on hard supports such as stone, metal (bronze, lead, silver, gold), ivory, and ceramics. A few only were painted in black or red on pottery. In general, the writing has a cursive character, except in monumental inscriptions which are not numerous. The monumental inscriptions are votive, funeral, or commemorative; none is a political decree, so numerous in Greek cities. Other categories of inscriptions are economical (archives, tariffs, lists), fiscal, monetary, magical, personal seals, indications of ownership, weights, letters, workshop marks, tokens, bullae, abecedaries ... As no corpus of all the Phoenician inscriptions from the Persian period exists as yet, and since their historical information is scarce and scattered, it is necessary for the historian to use them extensively, but as a complement to other kinds of sources.

NOTE

- 1 A project has been conceptualized to assemble all the Phoenician inscriptions of the Persian period, together with other texts and categories of documentation, on the website of P. Briant at the Collège de France: www.achemenet.com. The part concerning the Phoenician inscriptions has not yet been performed.

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CHAPTER 12

Egyptian Sources

Günter Vittmann

Most of the contemporary evidence for the First Persian Domination (27th Dynasty, 526–404/1 BCE) in Egyptian language is datable to the reigns of Cambyses and above all Darius I. A naophorous statue in the Vatican Museum had probably been set up by its owner Udjahorresnet in the temple of the goddess Neith in Sais in the Western Delta (Kuhrt 2010: pp. 117–122; Vittmann 2003: Pl. 15; here Figure 12.1). According to the inscriptions of this monument, Udjahorresnet played a fundamental role in integrating the conqueror Cambyses into traditional Egyptian royal ideology by establishing for him a pharaonic titlature and introducing him into the Temple of Sais to represent him as a pious ruler who respected Egyptian state religion. This image is also conveyed by a seal impression from Buto in the Delta which designates him as beloved by the goddess Uto (Kuhrt 2010: p. 127). The official epitaph issued in the name of Cambyses for the deceased Apis bull and the sarcophagus of the latter were discovered in the Serapeum at Saqqara (Kuhrt 2010: pp. 122–124). The classical tradition according to which Cambyses killed an Apis is neither confirmed nor contradicted by Egyptian sources, but some texts contain allusions to serious troubles at the beginning of the Persian conquest (Jansen-Winkel 2002). A Demotic papyrus from the Ptolemaic period depicts Cambyses as having heavily restricted the revenues of the temples (Kuhrt 2010: pp. 125–126). Cambyses is mentioned in some Demotic legal documents from Assiut concerning the conveyance of priestly offices and possessions within a family from the time of Amasis down to the reign of Cambyses (Spiegelberg 1932: pp. 39–53; Shore 1988).

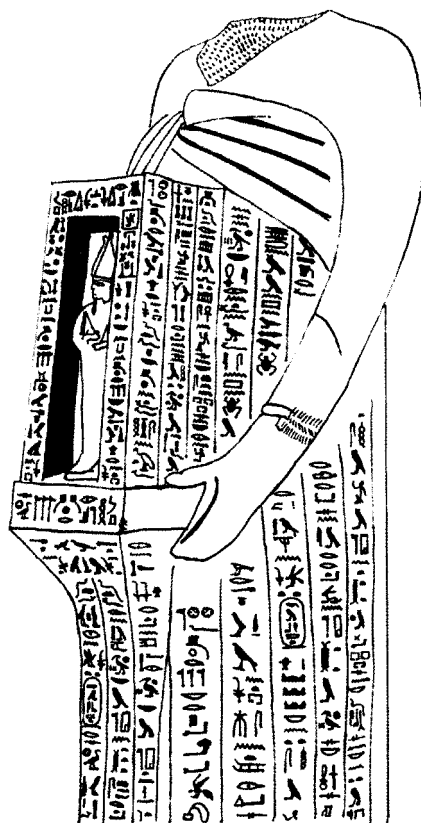


Figure 12.1 Vatican, Museo Gregoriano Egizio: Naophorous statue of Udjahorresnet. Source: Drawing by the author.

The long reign of Dareios I is represented both by monumental inscriptions and by administrative documents. Three large stelae with multilingual propagandistic texts were erected at the occasion of the building of a canal through the Red Sea near Tell el-Maskhuta, Kabrit, and Suez (Posener 1936: pp. 48–87; Kuhrt 2010: pp. 485–486). A large, now headless statue of the king (Kuhrt 2010: pp. 477–482) had been made in Egypt and, before it was transported to Susa, placed in a temple (Heliopolis? Pithom?) “in order that he who will see it should know that the Persian man holds Egypt,” as the Old Persian text puts it. The hieroglyphic version avoids this provocation, preferring instead to stress the adaptation of the Achaemenid ruler to Egyptian royal ideology.

The large temple of Amun in Hibis (Kharga Oasis) was decorated under this ruler (Lippert 2016; *here* Figure 12.2), and his cartouche can also be seen in the sanctuary of the temple of Qasr el-Ghueita in the same area (Darnell 2007). In general, however, royal involvement in building and decoration of temples and cultic activities outside Kharga and Dakhla (Amheida) is extremely



Figure 12.2 Relief of Dareios I offering milk to Amun in his temple at Kharga. Source: Reproduced by permission of Günter Vittmann.

scarce and modest: there is little more than two isolated blocks in Busiris and Elkab (Vittmann 2003: Pl. 19a), a fine painted wooden naos from Tuna el-Gebel/Hermopolis (Mysliwiec 1998: Pl. 9.1–9.2), and minimal traces of work at Karnak (Traunecker 1980).

Egyptian officials who were active under Dareios I include Udjahorresnet, the treasurer Ptahhotep and the overseer of works Khnemibre. According to the inscriptions on his statue, Udjahorresnet spent part of his life at the court of the king in Elam (i.e. Susa), where he was appreciated for his abilities as a physician (Kuhrt 2010: p. 119). The exact date of his return to Egypt is unknown, but his tomb, which had been built at the end of the 26th Dynasty, was discovered in Abusir (Bareš 1999). Ptahhotep, whose tomb was unearthed in Giza in the nineteenth century, is well known for his Brooklyn statue that depicts him in the habit of a Persian official (Vittmann 2003: Pl. 14 b–c), and an inscription that assigns to him the non-Egyptian term *qppš*, which has been linked with the tradition about the faithful eunuch Kombabos (Posener 1986; Briant 1996: p. 283). As to Khnemibre, hieroglyphic graffiti in the quarries of Wadi Hammamat in the Eastern desert attest his career as an overseer of the royal building projects for a period of nearly 35 years, from the end of the 26th Dynasty down to year 30 of Dareios I (492 BCE; Posener 1936: pp. 88–116).

Numerous stelae attest the burials of three Apis bulls during the reign of Dareios I; for the first of them the official epitaph from year 4 (518 BCE) is

preserved (Posener 1936: pp. 36–41). For the Apis bulls that continued being installed and buried under the later Achaemenids any direct inscrip-tional evidence is lacking; there is, however, a damaged mention of Artaxerxes I in the context of events regarding the “Mothers of Apis” (Smith et al. 2011: pp. 15–25).

A small stela in Berlin shows Dareios in the form of divine falcon adored by a private individual, a unique example of presumably posthumous divinization of this ruler (Burchardt 1911: pp. 71–72; Vittmann 2003: fig. 60). Particular esteem of Dareios, though on a more mundane level, is demonstrated by a text on the verso of the so-called Demotic Chronicle: there, Dareios I is presented as a king who had the earlier laws of the Egyptians until year 44 of Amasis (527 BCE) systematically collected (Kuhrt 2010: p. 125 [b]).

Many Demotic administrative documents are dated to the reign of Dareios I, among them an archive from Thebes that concerns the private affairs of funerary priests in the period from Amasis to Dareios (Pestman and Vleeming 1994). A famous papyrus, the copy of the lengthy draft of a petition which was to be submitted to a high official of Dareios, vividly describes the vexations suffered by an Egyptian temple scribe at the hands of the local clergy when trying to recover the prebends that had been snatched away by the priests from his ancestors in the past (Vittmann 1998; Hoffmann and Quack 2007: pp. 22–54). An important group of papyri is formed by the so-called correspondence of the satrap Pherendates from Elephantine, which illustrates the concern of the Achaemenid authorities for the administrative and economic aspects of an Egyptian temple (Kuhrt 2010: pp. 852–854; Martin 2011: pp. 288–292). Another letter of identical provenance sheds some light on the unrests in this area which may have been connected with the rebellions that took place at the end of Dareios’ rule (Martin 2011: pp. 295–296).

As for the successors of Dareios I, Egyptian sources from the Nile valley are extremely rare. Xerxes and Artaxerxes I are mentioned in some hieroglyphic graffiti in the Wadi Hammamat left by two high Persian officials of the local administration (Posener 1936: pp. 120–128; here Figure 12.3). Whereas there are some Demotic papyri that can be assigned to the rule of Artaxerxes I (Devauchelle 1995: pp. 38–40; Smith and Martin 2009: pp. 31–39, with interesting prosopographic connections with Aramaic documents), there is no papyrological evidence at all for Xerxes. An inscription from the early years of Greek rule, the so-called “satrap stela,” depicts him as an impious ruler of the past who seized property of the Egyptian gods but was finally expelled by them from his palace, together with his son (Schäfer 2011: pp. 146–151). Dareios II is the king into whose reign two fragmentary Demotic papyri from Saqqara with official reports can be dated (Smith and Martin 2009: pp. 24–31). Over the last two decades, however, several hundreds of Demotic ostraca were discovered in Ain el-Manawir (Kharga Oasis), many of them



Figure 12.3 Graffito of the Persian official Athiavahya from year 28 of Xerxes in the Wadi Hammamat. Source: Reproduced by permission of Kurt Tausend.

dating to the latter half of the First Persian Domination (Artaxerxes II, Darcios II). These documents from the area of the temple of Osiris-Iu, a local form of Osiris, testify to the continuity of cultic and religious activities in this period, and concern various aspects of public life such as water rights and agriculture. One ostrakon is particularly interesting because of its date, “year 2” of a prince Inaros. Whatever the correct reading of his title (Chauveau 2004 “great one of the rebels”; Winnicki 2006 “great one of the Bakales,” a Libyan tribe), he is most probably to be identified with one of the two(?) fifth-century rebels named Inaros that are known from Aramaic and Greek sources.

A first edition of these ostraca by Chauveau and Agut-Labordère is now available on the Achemenet site (www.achemenet.com; for a preliminary report see Chauveau 2011).

For the Second Persian Period (340/39–32 BCE; for the former date see Depuydt 2010), the only Egyptian sources that can be attributed to this period are some coins with the name of Artaxerxes (III) in Demotic (Kuhrt 2010: p. 413, Fig. 9.8) and a contract concerning a house division from the reign of Darcios III (Cenival 1966). There are, however, some hieroglyphic inscriptions that might possibly refer to events of that period: Petosiris, a high official in the administration of the temple of Thoth at Hermopolis, alludes to the troubles that befell Egypt (Kuhrt 2010: pp. 460–461). An inscription from the time of Philippus Arrhidaeus reports the rescue of the corpses of the sacred falcons that had been profanated by the “foreigners,” presumably the Persians toward the end of their rule (Sherman 1981: p. 90). Like Udjahorresnet some two centuries earlier, Somtutefnakhte, a priest of Harsaphes in

Herakleopolis, spent a certain time of his life outside Egypt: the inscriptions of the so-called “Naples stela” probably allude to the battle of Issos (333 BCE, Kuhrt 2010: pp. 458–459). It should not be forgotten, however, that all these documents that have been brought in connection with the Second Persian Period never mention the king by name, which leaves some doubt concerning the reliability of the current ascriptions.

The exact date of Chababash, an ephemeral Egyptian “anti-king” in the last years of the Second Persian Domination, is unknown (Depuydt 2010: pp. 192–193; Vittmann 2011: p. 410; Schäfer 2011, *passim*).

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- Wasmuth, M., Creasman, P. P., eds. (2020). *Udjahorresnet and His World*, *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* 26. Tucson, AZ: Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections. Most of the fourteen contributions are dedicated to various aspects relating to Udjahorresnet and his famous statue.

CHAPTER 13

Lydian, Carian, and Lycian Sources

Ivo Hajnal

Persians on Lycian, Lydian, and Carian Inscriptions

In 541 BCE, Cyrus II conquered the Lydian domain and formed the satrapy of Lydia. This marked the end of independence for the small states of south-west Anatolia. With regard to the epigraphic sources, however, the Iranization of the epichoric societies seems to be limited:

- The Lycian inscriptions and coinage provide 16 anthroponyms that plausibly are of Iranian origin. Only nine of these belong to persons related to Lycia itself, who, for example, act as dynasts or are mentioned as builders of steles or graves.
- The Lydian inscriptions prove only four anthroponyms that are of certain Iranian origin. They demonstrate that bearers of Iranian names took part in local life and assumed central positions. For example, a certain Mitridasta-, son of Mitrata-, was a priest in the Artemis temple of Sardes.
- The Carian inscriptions do not show any direct traces of Iranian influence.

Historic and Prosopographic Notes on the Lycian Evidence

The Lycian inscriptions permit most conclusions on Achaemenid presence in the pre-Hellenistic period. The relevant inscriptions are presented below in chronological order.

a) The “Xanthos Stele” (TL 44; around 400 BCE)

The most important source of local history is the so-called “Xanthos Stele” (TL 44) – a tomb pillar (or possibly the pillar of a cenotaph) that bears three texts in Lycian, Milyan (“Lycian B”), and Greek. The timeframe of these texts reaches from about 430 BCE until 395 BCE. The texts present the honored dynast’s achievements for the community as well as his military successes. The following passages refer to the Achaemenid presence in the region:

- TL 44a.36 et seq. mentions the Lycian and “Median” cavalry in parallel (*esbedi hēmenedi trñmil[ije]di se medezedi* “with the *h.*, Lycian and Median cavalry”).
- TL 44a.51 et sqq. refers to the Ionian War. TL 44a.54 et seq. mentions the military conflict with the army of Humr̥χ̥χa (*ese Humr̥χ̥χā tebāna terñ* “to defeat *H.* [and] his army”). Humr̥χ̥χa can be identified as Amorges, who with the help of Athens continued the Carian revolt his father Pissouthnes had instigated. In 412 BCE, the satrap and his allies from Sparta and Syracuse managed to arrest Amorges in Iasos (*Ijāeusas* TL 44a.52). The whole passage suggests Lycian participation in the coalition to arrest Amorges.
- TL 44b.58 et seq. refers to provisions (*azzalāi*) by Darius II and his successor Artaxerxes II, the Lycian author obviously calling himself their patron or supervisor. The passage in question is in the context of the arranging of sacrifices and the building of monuments. Furthermore, the whole part of the inscription on the eastern page of the stele (TL 44b) appears to refer to the continuation of the Ionian war. This can be concluded from the common mentioning of the satrap, of Sparta, and of Athens in TL 44b.26 et seq., and from the reference to a trireme from Chios TL 44b.22 (*trijerē kiježē*).
- TL 44c.1 et sqq. indicates that during the Carian revolt of Amorges (see above), the Lycian author was employed as a negotiator in the coalition between the Persians under the leadership of Kizzaprñna (Tissaphernes), son of Widrñna (Hydarnes), and the Spartans. The subsequent reference to Erijamāna in TL 44c.12 (probably Ἰερραμένης, also known from Thucydides as a negotiator between the Persians and Sparta) has the same historical context.

- TL 44c.13 et seq. mentions a stele or a monument that the author erected for “Tissaphernes and the Persians” (*ñtube ter[e] kizzaprñna epriti se parza meñ[ne] t[a]mā axa*).

The Xanthos Stele thus confirms from a local viewpoint what is stated in other sources (e.g. in Thucydides). The author of the inscription apparently seeks to document the close relationship of his dynasty with the Achaemenids after the split between Lycia and Athens. The Xanthos Stele at the same time marks the beginning of the decline of the dynasty of Xanthos.

b) **Arttuñpara (380–370 BCE)**

The end of the dynasty of Xanthos is closely connected with the rise of the eastern Lycian dynast Perikle (approximately 380–360 BCE). Directly connected with Perikle is Arttuñpara. His status has not yet become fully clear: It may well be assumed that Arttuñpara was a western Lycian dynast. However, it has been alternatively proposed that Arttuñpara was a Persian official (such as a governor). This is supported by a coin minted in Side, Pamphylia, which refers to Arttuñpara. Although it cannot be excluded that a Lycian dynast had coins produced outside Lycia, too, minting coins outside the ruled territory would have been easier for a Persian official. The other sources permit the following statements: Arttuñpara was at first active in western Lycia, since the only coins minted by him within Lycia are from Telmessos. But the inscriptions tell that he subsequently became an opponent of Perikle:

- TL 11.2 et seq.: The base of a sarcophagus from western Lycian Pinara contains the dating phrase *trñmisñ xñtewete ter[i] arttuñpara* “when Arttuñpara ruled over Lycia.” This phrase indicates a rule of Arttuñpara that extended across western and central Lycia.
- TL 29.7: The epitaph from western Lycian Tlos mentions military achievements of its builder, Ikuwe: this includes the takeover (?) of an institution (?; *wazzis*) from Edrijeus (Idrieus), the later Carian satrap from 351–344 BCE (TL 29.5 *ñtepi wazzisñ xalxxa edrijeusehñ*). The text then mentions Arttuñpara as the overseer of the Medians (TL 29.7 *arttuñpara medese pddatiti erije*).
- TL 104b: The inscription from eastern Lycia mentions the defeat of Arttuñpara against Perikle: TL 104b *tebursseli prñnawate (2) gasabala êke ese perikle (3) tebete arttuñparā se ñparahe (4) telēzijē* “Tebursseli, who built Gasabala (this facility) when Perikle defeated Arttuñpara and his army.” The inscription TL 104a, which is found on the same monument, also mentions an institution (?) *wazzis* created by Arttuñpara (see above on TL 29). The builder, Tebursseli, could therefore be a follower of Perikle, who achieved major military successes against Arttuñpara.

In summary, the inscriptions offer a picture that is quite clear and confirm what has been known so far: it appears Arttunīpara intended – be it as a Persian official or a Lycian dynast – to preserve the dominant position of the dynasty of Xanthos. But the rise of the eastern Lycian dynast Perikle appears to be unstoppable. At the latest after the conquest of the western Lycian city of Telmessos, which is reported by Theopompus (*Philippica*, F. 103.17), Perikle controlled all regions of Lycia within a short time span. The rise of Perikle around 370 BCE appears to be a signal for the satraps of western Anatolia to break away from the Persians. Subsequently, Lycia itself joined the Satraps' Revolt.

c) **Miθrapata (380–370^a)**

It is indicated by two epitaphs that Miθrapata ruled as a dynast in central Lycia around the same time as Arttunīpara (see b). Miθrapata is also mentioned on many coins from central and eastern Lycia, the portraits on which show a quite different style from those of the dynasts of Xanthos. The parallel and complementary character of the functional spheres of Arttunīpara and Miθrapata have led to the thesis that Miθrapata was a Persian official just like Arttunīpara. According to this thesis, the Achaemenids kept western Lycia and central/eastern Lycia under control through two of their officials before the takeover by eastern Lycian dynast Perikle. However, this scenario must remain speculation.

d) **Wataprddata (391–c. 350^a)**

Wataprddata (Autophradates) was the satrap of Lydia under Artaxerxes II. At the beginning of the Satraps' Revolt in 370^a, he is on the side of the king of kings and intervenes against the Cappadocian satrap Datames. Two Lycian inscriptions are important in his regard:

- TL 61.2: This epitaph from eastern Lycian Phellus is dated *ēñēχñtawata wataprddatehe*. Dating with reference to a satrap is conspicuous. It indicates that the inscription was written after the fall of Perikle.
- TL 40d.1 et seq.: This inscription, which is found in Xanthos on the sarcophagus of Pajawa, calls Wataprddata a Persian satrap and attributes to him a *χruwata* – possibly a religious donation – to the builder Pajawa/the sarcophagus (*ebeija [χr]uwata: meije pijetē wat[aprd]ata χssadrapa pa[r-z]a*). Obviously, Pajawa is a follower of the satrap, given that the sarcophagus shows an image of an oriental audience.

The Lycian texts referring to Wataprddata obviously presuppose the end of Perikle's rule and the quelling of the Satraps' Revolt in 362^a. This marks a new epoch for Lycia: the transfer under direct Carian control.

c) The Letoon Trilingual (N 320)

The Lycian-Aramaic-Greek Trilingual from the Letoon of Xanthos reflects the new, “Carian” epoch of Lycian history. Although it does not contain any direct references to Persia, it offers indirect indications of Lycia’s status and its society after the fall of Perikle. The Trilingual can be dated to 358^a or alternatively to 337^a and thus to the first year of the reign of Artaxerxes III or Arses/ Artaxerxes IV, resp. It contains the decision of the Xanthians and “perioeci” (*epewētlm̃m̃i* or *περιοίκοι*) to install a cult for the “Kaunian King” (*χ̣ñtawata x̣bideñni* or *βασιλεύς Καύνιος*) and for a certain Arkesimas, who is by the way not explicitly mentioned in the Aramaic version. In this connection, the Carian satrap Pixodaros (*Pigesere* or *Πιξώδαρος*) appoints two archonts with power over Lycia. The political constellation seems relatively clear: a different balance of power enables the Carian satrap and dynast to install trusted followers as archonts and to establish a Carian cult. Remarkable is the fact that the Lycian and Greek versions call Pixodaros a satrap of Lycia (N 320.1 et seq. *ēke tr̃m̃m̃isñ x̣ssaθrapazate pigesere*) while the Aramaic version calls him a satrap of Caria and Lycia (ḤŠTRPN’ ZY BKRWTRMYL). Assuming that the Aramaic version reflects the official Persian view, the double mentioning is another piece of evidence for the submission of Lycia under the control of the Carian Hecatomnid dynasty. Quite generally, the differences between the Lycian and Aramaic versions provide insight into the different perspectives of local and state administration. The rules stated on the Trilingual to secure the financing of the cult also provide valuable indications on the structuring of autonomy in the Persian Empire.

Conclusion

Even though Lydia, Caria, and Lycia have strategic and economic importance for the Achaemenids, the epichoric sources do not provide many insights at first glance. This may on the one hand be due to the random nature of tradition, but on the other hand also to the social standing of the indigenous languages: in a multinational and multilingual society like the Persian Empire, the role of indigenous languages is limited to the rendering of locally relevant facts and to private communication.

The relatively favorable evidence in Lycia illustrates that this local perspective is not lacking attractiveness. The Lycian inscriptions provide insight into a century of Lycian-Persian relations that are quite variable on a political and social scale. They tell primarily of changing coalitions and conflicts among the local elites, from which Achaemenid politics does not always refrain.

In summary, this is why the sources in epichoric languages often constitute a complementary supplement to the standard sources of Achaemenid history.

They provide both local confirmation of historical developments and valuable close-ups of social and cultural history.

FURTHER READING

- Bryce, T.R. (1986). *The Lycians in Literary and Epigraphic Sources*. Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press. Provides a useful overview of Lycian history and the relevant epigraphic sources.
- Childs, W.A.P. (1981). Lycian relations with Persians and Greeks in the fifth and fourth centuries re-examined. *Anatolian Studies*, 31, pp. 55–80. Focuses on the Lycian links with Persians and Greeks.
- Keen, A.G. (1998). *Dynastic Lycia: A Political History of the Lycians and Their Relations with Foreign Powers, C. 545–362 B.C.*, *Mnemosyne Supplementum*; 178. Leiden: Brill. Comprehensively describes the different stages of Lycian politics and history until the end of the dynastic system.

CHAPTER 14

Greek and Latin Sources

Reinhold Bichler and Robert Rollinger

Introduction

For a very long time, the reconstruction of the history of the Achaemenid-Persian Empire was mainly based on classical sources. These sources created successful master narratives that primarily focused on the Persian Wars at the beginning of the fifth and on the downfall of the empire at the end of the fourth centuries BCE. Although these sources altogether originate from the western fringes of the empire presenting a biased view on the Greeks' eastern neighbors, our view of the Achaemenid-Persian Empire is still considerably determined by these sources and their perceptions of the Persians. In the last 35 years a considerable change of perspective took place among specialists, giving way to a much more critical approach in evaluating these sources. Although there is still some disagreement about the adequate place of these sources within a modern history of the Achaemenid-Persian Empire (Harrison 2011), it can hardly be doubted that they are of inestimable value for any reconstruction of Achaemenid-Persian history.

From the Eve of the Persian Wars to the Peloponnesian War

Greek perceptions of the Persians had initially been closely intertwined with that of the Medes. Their power had extended eastwards of the territory of the Lydians. The expansion of the Persian Empire under Cyrus II, who overran

A Companion to the Achaemenid Persian Empire, Volume I, First Edition.

Edited by Bruno Jacobs and Robert Rollinger.

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the kingdoms of the Medes and the Lydians and affected the Greek cities in western Asia, was perceived as the sovereignty of “the Mede” (Xenophanes F 18 Diels). Also, the series of fights which took place in the aftermath of the Ionian Revolt (500/499 BCE) was referred to as *Medika* and the cooperation with the “enemy” was known as *Medism*. Still in 472 BCE an eponymous Medos appears as the first army leader of the Persians in Aeschylus’ tragedy *Persae* (765). But from Herodotus on (1.125.4; 7.61.3, 15.2; 7.62.1), the Persians are perceived as descendants of Perses or his father Perseus and the term *Medes* is linked with Medeia (Tuplin 1997; Rollinger 2003; Michels 2011; for all sources see Kuhrt 2007).

The ethnic groups and cities of the Persian Empire were first systematically treated about the time of the Ionian Revolt in Hecataeus of Miletus’ geography (*periodos ges*), the original of which is lost (FGrH 1). The introductory scene of Aeschylus’ *Persae*, performed in 472 BCE, still starts with a list of warriors and commanders of Xerxes’ army. The soldiers had been recruited from all over the empire (1–92) and the fleet counted 1207 ships (341–343), reminiscent of Homer’s *Iliad*. Thus, the victory against these superior forces appeared even more astounding. About two decades before, Phrynichus affected the Athenians with a tragedy that addressed the taking of Miletus by the Persians (Hdt. 6.21). After the Greek victory at Salamis (480 BCE), he also staged the misery of the defeated enemy in his *Phoenician Women*. But unfortunately, Phrynichus’ texts are lost. Simonides’ lyrical poetry is at least preserved in fragments. The most important parts refer to an elegy on the battle of Plataea (479 BCE) where the warriors are compared to the heroes of the Trojan War. Obviously, it was prestigious to partake in the glory of the winners of the Persian Wars by telling their story. Thus, in 470 BCE Pindar praised Hieron, city lord of Syracuse, as savior of Hellas’ freedom. His victories over Carthaginian, Phoenician, and Etruscan forces in the battle of Himera in Sicily and on sea at Cyme in southern Italy (480 and 474 BCE) were compared to those at Salamis and Plataea (Pythians 1.72–180). A new interpretation of the unexpected success in fending off Xerxes’ invasion was given by Aeschylus’ *Persae*. The young and imprudent king is misled by bad advisors. Overestimation of his gigantic forces leads to his defeat. The crossing of the Hellespont and sacrileges exhibit his hubris and bring about disaster (743–752, 807–812). The Athenians had already shown at Marathon (490 BCE) what men of free will were capable of doing against an army led by a despot (cf. 235–244). At Salamis, the freedom of Hellas was at stake (cf. 402–405). Xerxes instead had to fear that the peoples of Asia would no longer be prepared to bow to the Persian rule, pay tribute, and prostrate before the king (584–590) (Boedeker and Singer 2001; Bichler and Rollinger 2002; Föllinger 2009: pp. 53–76; Lenfant 2011).

With the ascent of Athens as a leading power in the Aegean, the recollection of the victory at Marathon, along with the fame of Salamis, began to gain importance. Huge monuments solemnize the victories of the past. At the same time, there is a fundamental change regarding the image of the Persians. The enemy now appears weak and wimpish and at times even disparaged in scenes of the genre (Miller 1997; Miller 2002). With the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War (431 BCE), the question of diplomacy in regard of the Persian Empire gained momentum. Aristophanes' first preserved comedy, the *Acharnians* (425 BCE), evokes the stereotypical images of Persian luxury and indulgence. It warns against the dangers of getting involved in diplomatic and political relations with the former enemy. In the last years of the Peloponnesian War the treaties which had been signed in 412 BCE by Sparta and the Great King proved to be disadvantageous for Athens. Probably it was then that the *Persians* by Timotheus was performed, a lyrical piece that told about the battle of Salamis to the accompaniment of the *kitara*, giving a rather disdainful impression of the Persians (Schmal 1997; Hutzfeld 1999; Huber 2002; Madreiter 2012).

Of crucial importance for the further development of the image of the Persians was the prose-style writing of the last decades of the fifth century BCE. Unfortunately, very little testimonial evidence of the first *Persica* survives – from Dionysius of Miletus (FGrH 687) to Charon of Lampsacus (FGrH 687b) and Hellanicus of Lesbos (FGrH 687a).

The same counts for the fragmentary parts of the portrayals of political leaders dealing with Persia by Ion of Chios (FGrH 392) and by Stesimbrotus of Thasos (FGrH 392). A prose treatise which was probably written in the last quarter of the fifth century BCE and is still preserved in the corpus of the Hippocratic writings played a specific role in creating the cliché of despotism in Asia. The unknown author of the treatise on *Airs, Waters, Places* underlines the role of the environment for the physical and mental condition of the inhabitants of a certain area. According to him, the soft Asian climate played an important role in fostering the despotic reign so typical of the Asian continent, whereas the spirit of freedom that prevailed in Europe was due to the harsher living conditions in this part of the world (*Airs, Waters, Places* 16; 23). Those who proved to be the bravest among the inhabitants of Asia were the ones who did not happen to live under the rule of a despot but who lived autonomously, no matter whether they were of Hellenic or Barbaric origin (16.5.). Later on, Aristotle changed this schematic view, reinforcing the antithesis between Hellenic and Barbaric tribes (*Politica* 1327b 23–33; 1285a 19–22) (Jouanna 1996).

One of the most important accounts of the Persian Empire ever written appears with the *Histories* of Herodotus. The main line of his narration concentrates on the rise and later fate of imperial power in Asia which threatened the

world of autonomous Greek settlements and entangled the Greeks in a series of bloody wars. The fatality of an imperial policy is demonstrated impressively in the story of the Persian kings, ranging from Cyrus to Xerxes. Thanks to the gradual expansion of their empire, Herodotus had the possibility of giving account of the customs and conventions of the many different peoples of the world, including in his considerations the stories of the former kingdoms of the Lydians, the Medes, the Babylonians, and the Egyptians. The power of the Persian Empire seemed to have reached its apogee under Darius I. From this point onward, the conflicts between the Greek and Persian worlds began to gain increasing importance. Herodotus depicts the Persian Wars as a set of related events starting with the Ionian Revolt and ending with the success in fending off Xerxes' invasion army. His account of events ends when the Athenians begin to extend their power over the Aegean after their victories at Salamis, Plataea, and Mycale in 480 and 479 BCE, thus following in the footsteps of the Persians. He only briefly comments on the further history of the Greeks that was characterized by growing conflicts between Athens and Sparta, which had stood united against the external enemy. These conflicts culminated in the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War in 431 BCE. The famous events of the past assume the role of a teaching play, which serves as a starting point for assessing the tragedy of the current period from the point of view of Herodotus and his audience (Bichler 2000; Bichler and Rollinger 2011; Bakker et al. 2002; Dewald and Marincola 2006; Rollinger 2004 Degen 2017; Irwin 2013; Irwin 2017).

Herodotus' ethnographical accounts, especially those of Persian customs and conventions (cf. 1.131–140), are basically interpreted from a Greek point of view and give an ambiguous mirror image. The empire of the Persians is characterized by impressive resources. Its infrastructure, such as the network of roads and the messenger service, is astounding (5.52–54; 8.98). The Persians owed their power to a simple way of life that was organized according to strict rules (cf. 1.71, 89; 9.122), but the propensity of the elite to a luxurious lifestyle puts their attainments at risk. Nevertheless, scenes of luxury, intrigues, and harems at court, which are described excessively in later accounts, appear only rarely in Herodotus (cf. 3.130; 9.108–113). In spite of their luxury lifestyle, the Persians prove to be brave warriors even in defeat. Nevertheless, there is a tendency to interpret Persian kingship with its claim of universality and its supportive ceremonial, like the practice of *proskynesis* (bowing/prostrating oneself before the king), in a critical way. Herodotus' accounts of the Great Kings are quite differentiated. But there is a basic pattern of their misconduct. They break the rules and cultic commandments of their own society and tend to overestimate their own power while underestimating the enemy. Thus, they fail in all their megalomaniacal campaigns. But in this regard, the various tyrants and despots resemble each other, no matter whether they are of Non-Greek or of Hellenic origin!

Herodotus also describes a series of Persian characters of noble spirit, wisdom, bravery, and courage who are prepared to go as far as self-sacrifice (cf. 3.80.2–80.5; 83). Wise Persians warn against the dangers of hubris and deplore the human inability to avoid fatal events (cf. 7.10; cf. 7.18, 45–52; 9.16). At times, the Greeks are even put to shame through the example of the Persian kings. Cyrus condemns the dubious activities and the cheating that took place in the Agora (1.153). Darius I shows respect to foreign customs (3.38). Even a despotic ruler like Xerxes does not want to infringe legal principles such as the protection of envoys, in harsh contrast to the Athenians' misbehavior in the Peloponnesian War (7.134–137) (Bichler 2000; Dorati 2000; Jacobs 2003; Rollinger 2010).

From the Peloponnesian War to Alexander

The relationship between the various Greek communities and the Persian Empire in the subsequent period was characterized by acts of war as well as intensive diplomatic activities. In his accounts of the Peloponnesian War, Thucydides delivers the wording of three treaties that were signed in 412 BCE between Sparta and Darius II as well as the satrap Tissaphernes. This alliance changed the balance of power within Greece (8.18, 37, 58). An earlier alliance between Athens and Persia referred to by the rhetorician Andocides is debated in modern scholarship (*On the peace with Sparta* § 29) (Wiesehöfer 2006).

Thucydides' unfinished work was followed up by the first part of Xenophon's *Hellenica* (books 1–2) which describes the last phase of the Peloponnesian War and the following civil war in Athens (411–403/1 BCE). Its second part (books 3–6) comprises the events up to 362 BCE and exemplifies Sparta's attempts to hold a permanent supremacy in Greece. The Persian Empire is focused insofar as Greek politics are concerned – such as the wars in Asia Minor, Cyprus, and the Aegean or the King's Peace of 387/6 BCE. The anonymous *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia*, which were probably written a little bit later, are only fragmentarily preserved. They give further accounts of Sparta's campaigning in Asia Minor (400–394 BCE). However, for Artaxerxes II (404–359) another campaign, which had been launched in Asia Minor shortly before, appeared far more menacing. It was the rebellion of his brother, Cyrus the Younger, which came to an end in the battle of Cunaxa near Babylon with Cyrus' death (401 BCE). This event was crucial for the further Greek image of the Persian Empire thanks to two extremely heterogenic accounts, namely Ctesias' *Persica* and Xenophon's *Anabasis* (Tuplin 1993; Bleckmann 2006).

Ctesias of Cnidus wrote one of the most influential accounts conceptualizing the world of the Persian Empire as an “Orient” *avant la lettre*. Although his work *Persica* (originally 23 books) came down to us only through its use

by later authors, its textual structure and the literary talent of the author are still noticeable. The Persian Empire appears as part of a preceding line of empires ruling all over Asia that began with the Assyrians and continued with the Medes. However, like Herodotus, Ctesias conceptualized at the empire's eastern fringes a large sway of land that could not be conquered by the Persians or by their Assyrian predecessors. This land, which was dubbed "India" by the Greek authors, had access to incredible resources. Ctesias dedicated a small booklet to the description of this country. *Indica* depicts a seemingly ageless world and constitutes a counterpart to the monumental history of events of the *Persica* (books 7–23). Ctesias presented himself as an eye and ear witness, first as a physician of the king, Artaxerxes II, and his mother, Parysatis, and finally even as a successful diplomat (F 30). He saw the king's court as a dark center of power, but despite all their resources and their huge army, the kings themselves appear as rather weak. At court, influential advisors who are often depicted as eunuchs play a dominant role. Outside, the fortune of the empire depends on the loyalty of satraps and generals. Ctesias ascribed a special role to the royal women at court. Queens such as Parysatis, the mother of Cyrus the Younger and Artaxerxes II, as well as Amestris (Xerxes' widow) appear as dominant agents of intrigues and cruelty. There is controversy in modern scholarship as to whether Ctesias' accounts are related more to fact or to fiction. Their literary value is widely appreciated. Ctesias created dramatic scenes and impressive novelistic accounts. To present alternative stories to those of Herodotus was part of his literary program. How far he managed to draw on authentic folklore and local traditions is hard to tell (Bichler 2011; Wiesehöfer et al. 2011; Rollinger 2010; Waters 2020).

Writing *Persica* became popular in the fourth century BCE. The *Persica* by Dinon of Colophon, of which 30 fragments are preserved, require special mention. Like Ctesias, he created a kaleidoscopic picture of the Great King's court with its luxury and intrigues, but he tried to "correct" his predecessor in many points. He entered new terrain with the description of the reigns of Artaxerxes II and Artaxerxes III up to the reconquest of Egypt in 343/2 BCE. The *Persica* of Heraclides of Cumae, of which only seven fragments still exist, also include a series of elaborate accounts of the luxurious way of life at court and in the harem. These *Persica* had considerable influence on the works of later authors. This is especially true for the prehistory of the Persian Empire and the period from Artaxerxes I to Artaxerxes II, which was not treated by Herodotus any more (Lenfant 2009; Madreiter 2012).

An alternative, idealizing view of the Persian Empire was created by Xenophon. This already becomes obvious in parts of his first work, the *Anabasis*. The destiny of the Ten Thousand, the Greek mercenaries, who had taken part in Prince Cyrus' disastrous campaign against the Great King, were in the center of action. Although they had remained undefeated in battle, they

were forced to take a route through the territory of the enemy up to the Black Sea, after having lost their commander through a deceit of the satrap Tissaphernes. Thus, Xenophon had the chance to present his skills as a responsible officer. For him, Cyrus the Younger had been a model of prudent leadership and he set an impressive literary monument for him in his obituary (1.9). The Empire of the Great King (Artaxerxes II) was regarded with a certain distance. Tissaphernes, for instance, was given the prototypical role of a devious politician. The events around the battle of Cunaxa still disguise the perception of Tissaphernes' well-calculated policy of power as described in Xenophon's *Hellenica*. His rival, Pharnabazus, instead was portrayed as a noble character who was committed to his family tradition and the king, while being aware of the conflicts that went along with his loyalty (cf. *Hellenica* 3.4.5–4.6 with 4.1.29–1.40) (Tuplin 2004; Stoll 2013).

A literary analysis of prudent leadership can be found all along in Xenophon's works. However, in his *Cyropaedia* he projected all his ideals of military cautiousness and smart guidance, along with philosophical wisdom, economic understanding, and statesman-like awareness, onto one person. There Xenophon illustrates the development of a universal monarchy on a morally and institutionally stable basis exemplified by a mostly fictional story of the founder of the Persian Empire, king Cyrus the Great. Thus, at a time when Greece was divided by internal conflicts and the ascent of Philipp II of Macedonia was still not yet to be foreseen. According to the underlying logic, the main institutions that Herodotus attributed to Darius are presented as creations of Cyrus. His fairness in warfare, his clemency as a judge, and his moral integrity make him into a character worth admiring. Novelistic parts contribute to an oriental ambiance, but they lack the dark and brutal atmosphere so typical of the scenes at court in the contemporary *Persica*. Cicero fittingly referred to the *Cyropaedia* as an exemplary model of a "just rulership" (*iustum imperium: Ad Quintum fratrem* 1.1.23). Its reception history was striking, but its tendency toward idealization was equally noticeable. Plato's snappy critique hit the blind spot: the integrity of the state depended on the integrity of a king who was not capable of guaranteeing a good line of succession (*Nomoi* 3.694c/695b). Xenophon himself had not managed to get rid of the contemporary tendencies to hold contempt against the Persian Empire, for there lies a deep gap between the fictitious past and the author's own period, when the Persian Empire is characterized by a typical set of clichés including decadence and decline (final chapter 8.8) (Walser 1984; Flower 2017).

Similar clichés are employed in Isocrates' political rhetoric. In his *Panegyricus* (380 BCE) he suggested unleashing a new Persian War, unifying the Greeks under the leadership of Athens and Sparta. According to him, the education for servitude and the luxurious life of the Persian elite led to cowardice and

weakness among the Persian population. The satraps were said to be faithless, cowardly, submissive, and arrogant (c.f. esp. 123 f.; 149–155). Lastly, the prospect of rich treasures, namely the gems of Asia, were to spur on for battle (187). Half a century later, in 346 BCE, Isocrates urged Philipp II of Macedonia in a similar way to wage war against Artaxerxes III. In his eyes it was a shame that the Barbarians in Asia lived in greater prosperity than the Greeks. A new Persian War was to bring Philipp treasures and glory (*Philippus* 124–126, 132–137). Such clichés of Persian lifestyle were a useful tool for political agitation. Examples are also to be found in Demosthenes' speeches, however with an entirely different intention. There it is Philipp who was perceived as the more threatening “barbaric” enemy, and an alliance with the Great King became an attractive option. In this case, one should overcome the common clichés, stated the famous orator (cf. *Philippica* 4.31–4.34) (Marincola 2007).

An important contribution to Persian history within the frame of a Greek history was made by Ephorus of Cyme. His work, which originated in the time of Philipp II and made use of the different *Persica* of the fourth century is lost but was of great influence for later authors such as Diodorus and Strabo. Ephorus developed the idea that in 480–479 BCE Greece had been threatened by a unified attack of Persians and Carthaginians (FGrH 186 F 70). Unfortunately, the *Philippica* of Theopompus of Chios, written soon after Ephorus' work, are also lost. The author was admired and feared for his rigid moral judgments. The work focused on Philipp II but also concerned the Persian Empire of the fourth century and depicted the luxurious lifestyle of the Great King's court. When Alexander took up the military operation against the Great King already initiated by his father, the conquerors conceptualized the Persian Empire according to the conventional ideas developed by Greek tradition in the fourth century BCE (Marincola 2007; Parmeggiani 2014).

The classical authors' descriptions of Alexander the Great's campaigns are important but also problematic sources concerning the Persian Empire. They are of great importance for our knowledge about the empire's institutions and structures. This applies to the satrapies and their administration, for instance the structure of the army, as well as the king's court in the battlefield. Furthermore, we receive important data about the eastern parts of the empire of which little had been known until Alexander's conquest. The Alexander-historians mainly focused on the assessment of the personality of the conqueror. Thereby the Persian Empire serves as the setting for a dramatic story with a hero who is presented from different angles. The protagonists on the side of the enemy have a backstage role in a play concentrated on the successful conqueror, whereas Darius III (336–330) found his place in the shadow of Alexander (Briant 2003). The adaption of traditional Persian customs and court ceremonial by Alexander staging himself as the legitimate successor of Darius III (just as he claimed to be the successor of the Pharaohs in Egypt)

could be perceived as a sign of Alexander's growing hubris. With Callisthenes (FGrH 124), Alexander had brought along a historiographer who described his campaign as a Panhellenic war of revenge. The image of Darius fleeing prematurely and in a cowardly way both at Issus and Arbela (333 and 331 BCE) probably dates back to him, as does the account of the burning of Persepolis' palace as a deliberate demonstration of the successful revenge. Meanwhile, Callisthenes himself was sentenced to death (327 BCE). His critique of Alexander's taking over the ceremony of *proskynesis* was stylized as a memorial of Hellenic love of freedom (Briant 2003; Rollinger 2016; Ruffing 2017).

It was only after Alexander's death that an entire series of publications emerged, written mostly by companions of the king or at least by people who took part in the great campaign. All these accounts are preserved only thanks to their quotation in later works. This makes it difficult to determinate their chronological order and their reciprocal intertextuality. The staging of the military campaign in a fascinating way, exhibiting a world full of marvels and interesting encounters, started off relatively early with the novelistic work of Onesicritus. He is known for his marvelous tales about India where Alexander appeared as a wise man in arms (FGrH/BNJ 134 F 17) (Müller 2011; Winiarczyk 2011). The reception of the work of Nearchus (FGrH/BNJ 133) was also mainly due to his reports about India and his account about the passage of a fleet led by him from the mouth of the river Indus to the Persian Gulf. Most important for the image of the Persian Empire was the work of Cleitarchus, whose father Dinon had already become known through his *Persica*. Cleitarchus should better not be regarded an eye-witness. His history of Alexander with its flowery novelistic style found a great number of readers (FGrH 137). It is considered the main source of the historical tradition used by Diodorus, Trogus/Iustinus, Curtius (and partly Plutarch), referred to as *Vulgate*. There Alexander begins to develop increasingly despotic traits along with his victories over Darius III, whereas in comparison with the accounts of Plutarch and Arrian, his enemy is described as a far more noble person. The latter authors both give a rather euphemistic and idealizing account of Alexander's personality. With the work of Ptolemy (FGrH 138), Arrian had deliberately chosen an adequate main source. While recalling Alexander's great deeds, Ptolemy managed to bring in the appraisal of his own merits and, what was more, he also managed to find a way of legitimizing his political ideas in the later struggle for power after Alexander's death. The crucial question of priority between the writings of Cleitarchus and Ptolemy cannot be definitely decided although a recently published papyrus (POxy LXXI, 4808) suggests a later date for the former. Arrian's second important source, Aristobulus' history (FGrH/BNJ 139), is considered the latest report of one of Alexander's companions. It also presented an idealistic image of Alexander and described the marvels of the remote countries in the east (Gilhaus 2017).

From the Hellenistic Age to the Roman Empire

The main focus of Hellenistic historiography was concentrated on the wars in the aftermath of Alexander the Great, the development of the Hellenistic empires, as well as the ascent of the Roman Empire in the west and the emergence of the Parthian Empire in the east. However, one can still find some substantial information about the Achaemenid Empire. There is, for instance, Polybius with his polemic about Callisthenes' account of the battle at Issus (12.17–22) and his description of the city of Ecbatana and its temple of Anahita (10.27; c.f. Berossus' *Babyloniaka* F 12 BNJ). The *Oeconomica* which are (incorrectly) attributed to Aristotle present a short overview of the earnings and the financial administration of the Achaemenid Empire (2.1.1–1.4). But the decisive challenge to deal with the ancient Persians was the rise of the Roman Empire, its victory over the Macedonian successors, and the confrontation with the Parthians (Walbank 1957/1967/1979).

Therefore, seminal information is preserved by writers of universal history, starting off with Diodorus. He was born in Sicily and after the middle of the first century BCE he went to Rome and published the result of his comprehensive studies, the *Bibliothēke* (40 books). Parts of this opus have been preserved completely (1–5; 11–20) and some only in fragments. The history of the Persian Empire was treated according to the perspectives of Greek history both from a thematic and from a chronological point of view. Book 17 contains the earliest history of Alexander the Great so far preserved (with a gap concerning the period from 329 to 327 BCE), mainly based on the *Vulgate*. Herodotus, Ctesias, and Ephorus were the central sources for Diodorus' view of the Persian Empire before Alexander's campaign. His work is of utmost importance for our knowledge of the relationship and the conflicts between Greece and Persia in the fourth century BCE (Stronk 2017).

Dating back to Byzantine times only few excerpts of the large universal history by Nicolaus of Damascus, written in the time of Augustus, have come down to us. They present a fantastical history of Cyrus which was based on Ctesias. Of greater importance was another work of universal history, written in Latin by Pompeius Trogus, a native of Gallia Narbonensis. His 44 books are preserved only by an excerpt made by Iustinus (*Epitome*), which was probably written in the third century CE. The story of the Persian kings ranging from Cyrus to Darius I is mainly based on Herodotus, but additions based on later writers such as Ctesias were also made. The accounts of the reigns of Artaxerxes II and Artaxerxes III are of great importance. Books 11–12 treating the wars of Alexander the Great are strongly influenced by the *Vulgate*, although the author's own critical views also become obvious. Along with Herodotus' work, Justinus became the main source for the description of the Persian Empire and its history in the *Historiae Adversus Paganos* by Orosius

of Bracara, which is considered the most salient work of Christian universal history of late antiquity (Rollinger 2011).

Biographies, which began to become more popular, also played an essential role for the development of elementary ideas regarding the Persian Empire and its protagonists. The *Vitae* by Cornelius Nepos dating back to the later Roman Republic include a series of Greek army leaders who had to deal with representatives of the Persian Empire. The image of the Persian Empire is conventional, but Nepos also conveys some important information originating from sources of the fourth and fifth centuries BCE which have been lost in the original. His *Datames*, mainly based on Dinon's *Persica*, whom Nepos greatly admired (c.f. *Konon* 5.4), is of outstanding importance. Datames represents a noble satrap who fell victim to a false friend (Mithridates) and is destroyed by the hatred of the Great King (Artaxerxes II).

Even more than Nepos' *Vitae*, Plutarch's comprehensive biographies include important details on the relationship between Greek communities and the Persian Empire, which often date back to the fourth and fifth centuries BCE. His *Alexander* gained exceptional importance. It gives an idealized image of the protagonist and presents a series of interesting anecdotes. The Persian Empire itself is regarded more as a background setting for the story. The biography of *Artaxerxes II* requires special mention. The author mainly draws on information from the lost *Persica* by Ctesias and Dinon, giving a somewhat questionable image of the king living in a court full of luxury and intrigues (Binder 2008).

Plutarch's *Moralia*, a series of different essays, offer further, more scattered information about Persian customs and institutions, a number of anecdotes, and even details on Persian religious beliefs. The dominating point of view is determined by Greek ideas on moral behavior and cultural values. It also becomes obvious that Plutarch's attitude toward the conflicts between Greeks and Persians is far from neutral. In his treatise *De malignitate Herodoti* he addresses Herodotus' sympathy for the Barbarians in a negative way. A perfect example of the rhetorical idealization of Alexander is an early treatise where Plutarch addresses the idea of uniting the peoples of Asia and Europe by Alexander, who makes them live under the same order and rule (*De Alexandri magni fortuna aut virtute, libri ii* = *Moralia* 32d–34b).

The two most outstanding treaties on Alexander also appeared within the first two centuries CE. Curtius wrote a *Historia Alexandri Magni* in 10 volumes, of which 3–10 are still preserved, although with some lacunae. Based on the *Vulgate*, Curtius gives a fascinating account that includes a series of dramatic scenes and harsh moral judgments which point to the author's contemporary society. Alexander, a highly talented young king whose incredible success is too great a challenge for his moral competence, develops into a tyrannical ruler (Wulfram 2016). Meanwhile, Darius III is presented as a more

respectable character; however, the “oriental” setting of the story is described fascinatingly but in a cliché way. The Macedonian habit of taking on Persian customs and Persian luxury is evaluated in an extremely negative way by Curtius. He even mentions a melting together of the vices of both peoples (9.7.15) (Rollinger 2009; Briant 2010).

The image of Alexander put forth by Arrian is entirely different. The author from Nicomedia possibly already outlined his work under the influence of Trajan’s campaign against the Parthians and then completed it in the course of the decades that followed. He described Alexander’s campaigns in seven books, which he called *Anabasis* (as with Xenophon whose example he had taken). This work is followed by a small *Indike*. Although Arrian’s Alexander also shows some negative traits, he mostly behaves in a very competent way, especially with regard to his strategic abilities. Ptolemy’s work may have helped Arrian in describing the military ventures – both the big battles and the wearing feuds in the upper satrapies as well as the brutal campaign in India – as undertakings that worked according to a rigid order. The cultural world of the Achaemenid Empire remains relatively obscure to Arrian. But his *Anabasis* is one of the most important sources concerning the topography, the infrastructure, and the administration of the Persian Empire (Bosworth 1980, 1995; Ruffing 2017).

Strabo’s *Geography* is also an important source of information regarding these issues. In his work, which comprises 17 volumes, Strabo places the Imperium Romanum under the reign of the Emperor Augustus in the center of the *oikumene*. *Geography* is full of allusions to Alexander’s campaign as well as to the deeds of the former Persian kings from Cyrus to Xerxes. Strabo’s work gives detailed geographical accounts of the regions that had once been ruled by the Achaemenids and it includes a series of fragments of the early Alexander-historians. The encyclopedia (*Naturalis historia*) by Pliny the Elder (first century CE) abounds with details on the geography and nature of the Persian Empire. Claudius Ptolemy (second century CE) wrote a geographical handbook that preserves the whole contemporary cartographic knowledge of his time, including those regions where the Achaemenids once lived and ruled (Lenfant 2017).

On the whole, the importance of the literature written under Roman rule during the first centuries CE can hardly be overestimated regarding the understanding of what was said to be known about the Achaemenid Empire in Greek and Roman antiquity. As Lucius Ampelius states in his *liber memorialis*, a basic knowledge of the Achaemenid Empire was part of the elementary educational program (c. 13). The personality of the rulers and sometimes also that of generals as well as of noble women was a constant source of examples of exemplary and deterring behavior. Such examples are to be found in the writings by Valerius Maximus (first century CE) and in the anecdotes by Aelian (second/third century CE). According to Aelian, Artaxerxes III who conquered

Egypt once again was regarded as a sacrilegious despot like Cambyses (*varia historia* 4.8; 6.8; *natura animalium* 28). Athenaeus (second century CE) gives account of the way Persian luxury was imagined at the court of the Great King. So he describes that according to Heracleides Ponticus, the Persians and the Medes loved luxury more than anyone else but they were still the bravest and most generous among the Barbarians (*Deipnosophistai* 12.5, 512a). Pausanias' account of Greece in 10 volumes (second century CE) repeatedly refers to the time of the Achaemenids, the Persian Wars especially. A list of examples of stratagems in the various confrontations between Persians and Greeks is to be found in the work of Polyaeus (second century CE). Book 7 treats several kings, army leaders, and satraps of the Persians, whereas an entire chapter of Book 4 deals with Alexander the Great (4,3). Diogenes Laertius' *Lives and Doctrines of the Philosophers* (third century CE) convey important information on the ideas about the religious beliefs of the Persians as they have been conceptualized by earlier Greek authors. In this context, we learn of letters by Heraclitus of Ephesus and king Darius (9.13–14), for instance, and about Aristotle's ideas about the wisdom of the Magi (1.6–9) (Briant 1996; Brodersen 2010; Lenfant 2011).

During the Roman Empire, Persian kings and Persian topics also loomed large in the writings and declamations of the Second Sophistic. Since classical authors of these times conceptualized the contemporaneous Parthians as "Persians," the Persian War topic has generally been taken by modern scholarship as an element of official Roman propaganda, allegedly to stigmatize their eastern opponents as the eastern enemies of old days that had already been defeated by the west (Lerouge 2007). This is, however, a misunderstanding of these sources' intention and reach. It is true that the Persian Wars loomed large in educational contexts of the Second Sophistic, but they hardly became an instrument of official Roman politics (Rollinger 2019).

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SECTION III.B

ARCHEOLOGICAL SOURCES

CHAPTER 15

Persia (including Khūzestān)

Rémy Boucharlat

Two of the four royal residences of Darius and his successors are located in southwestern Iran: Persepolis in the mountains of Fārs, the ancient Persia, the cradle of the Achaemenid dynasty; Susa in the lowlands of Khūzestān, an extension of Mesopotamia, a part of the ancient kingdom of Elam and the Achaemenid satrapy of Elam. Susa is halfway between Persepolis and Babylon in Mesopotamia, the ancient capital of the eastern world until Cyrus' conquest, and another Achaemenid residence. In this part of the empire, even carefully ruled as an "Itinerant state" (Briant 2002: p. 187) during the frequent and long journeys of the king, no city, not even Susa, is a permanent royal capital. This is probably the main reason why no cities in the true sense of the word, as we know them from previous Near Eastern empires, could be located at Persepolis or Susa, and why these two places were no more "urban" than Pasargadae, the residence of Cyrus, the founder of the empire.

Apart from these famous royal residences, the settlement pattern of the southwest of Iran is poorly known, not to speak of the religious monuments and cemeteries, though the situation has been changing slightly in recent decades. Newer discoveries fill some blanks on the archeological maps. This vast area covers three modern provinces: Fārs around Shiraz, Būshehr along the coast of the Persian Gulf, and Khūzestān to the west. Few sites occupied during the Achaemenid period are known outside the mentioned royal residences and a half-dozen elite buildings using stone components. To be added are find spots of column bases, sometimes in situ. The settlements of ordinary people, yet very few, are gradually identified in the three provinces as they are explored

and the archeological material becomes better known. Southwest Iran does not appear as densely populated at this time as some areas of the western parts of the empire, such as Egypt, Levant, and Anatolia, but these regions have certainly been more intensely covered by archeologists for some 150 years. As for the cemeteries, their absence is notable, apart from the royal tombs at Naqsh-e Rostam and near the terrace of Persepolis. This absence of archeological evidence raises the question of religious practices and beliefs of the Persians and other populations in the heartland of the empire (cf. Chapter 85 The Heartland Pantheon and Chapter 87 Funerary Customs).

Pasargadae, the First Royal Residence

Cyrus chose Pasargadae as his royal residence in Persia probably soon after his accession to power before 550. The main part of the site is organized and built in order to make visible the king's power. Located in an intermountain plain at 1850 m above sea level, Pasargadae benefits from permanent water resources in a rather mild climate in summer. The archeological site covers 300 ha. The known residential area (Figure 15.1) covers some 100 ha, in which a half-dozen stone buildings are scattered. The most famous monument, isolated in the southwest, is universally recognized as the tomb of Cyrus (Figure 87.1). This is a free-standing structure made of ashlar masonry, with large blocks carefully fitted and bound by iron clamps embedded in lead. It is house-like (6.40×5.35 m) with a gabled roof, resting on a plinth of six tiered steps (13.35×12.30 m on the ground). The inner burial chamber, which Alexander visited twice, intact in 330 and plundered in 327, measures 3.17×2.11 m and is 2.11 m high (Stronach 1978: pp. 24–43).

At 1300 m northeast there are two rectangular columned halls with respectively four and two pillared porticoes, and two small pavilions with columns (Figure 15.2). Beyond a bridge crossing the stream, a monumental gateway is also a pillared rectangular hall. In the opposite direction, a 14 m high tower (Figure 15.3) has been interpreted as a grave or a temple, which are unlike functions, given the very small size of the inner chamber placed in the upper part of the building without windows. According to a unique source (Plut. *Artax.* III, 1–2), to be cautiously dealt with (Binder 2010), this tower could have been the place of dynastic ceremonies, such as the coronation of the new king (Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1983). Northeast of these stone buildings, the 30 m high natural hill is crowned by a large platform, called Takht-e Solaiman, 14 m high, made of huge stone blocks carefully dressed and bound by clamps. It was probably planned to be the seat of Cyrus' residence. This project was given up and replaced under Darius I by a mudbrick defense wall and series of rooms (Stronach 1978: pp. 11–23).

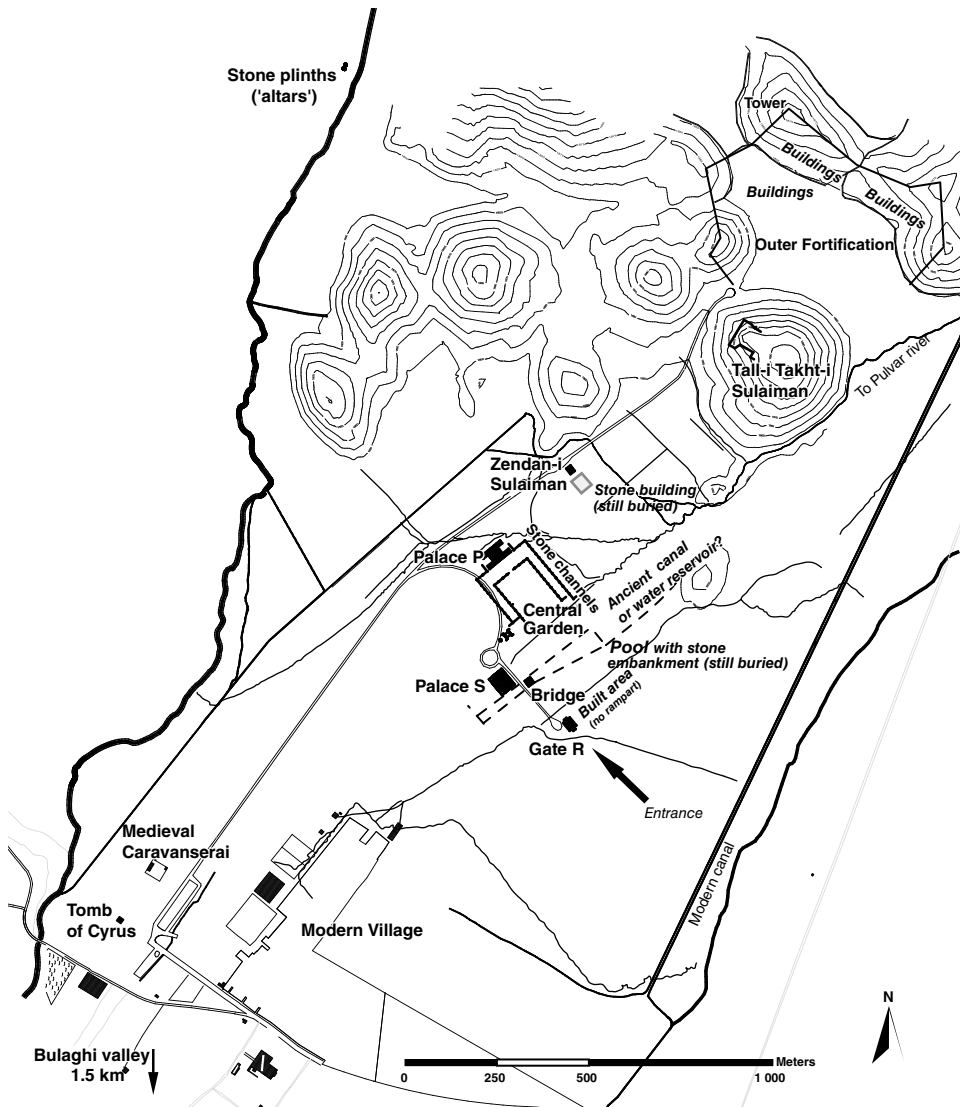


Figure 15.1 Plan of Pasargadae. Source: Reproduced by permission of the Joint Iran–France Mission at Pasargadae.

The ashlar masonry is a new technique in southwest Iran. After his conquest of Asia Minor, Cyrus imported from Ionia and Lydia craftsmen, architects, and sculptors, who realized an architecture strongly influenced by art and techniques of these regions (stone cutting techniques, bases and column shafts, floors). These techniques are implemented in hypostyle halls which are, for the first time in Iran, equipped with stone column bases made of two square plinths supporting a torus, and in the two main buildings, with columns



Figure 15.2 Pasargadae, aerial view of Palace P. Source: Reproduced by permission of the Joint Iran–France Mission at Pasargadae; photography B.N. Chagny.



Figure 15.3 Pasargadae, aerial view with Palace P and Zendan-e Sulaiman. Source: Reproduced by permission of the Joint Iran–France Mission at Pasargadae; photography B.N. Chagny.

made of stone shafts, which replace the wooden poles known before in the northwest and west (Nylander 1970; Stronach 1978; Boardman 2000). The plan of these buildings is a Persian creation, especially the hypostyle hall. Architecture and decoration also incorporate elements from Mesopotamia. Representations of animals and monsters on bas-reliefs and sculpture flanking the gates in Assyrian sculpture are also used at Pasargadae, perhaps at the main doorways of Gate R, but certainly on top of the columns of this building in the shape of double protomae which formed part of the capitals. The gate-house, a hall with two rows of four columns – also a Persian innovation – shows a remarkable bas-relief forming the jamb of a side entrance: a man (Cyrus or a genius?) wearing an Elamite dress with an Assyrian double pair of wings wearing an Egyptian crown (Figure 94.1). This relief intends to show the diversity of the empire, and this policy, born at Pasargadae, will find its grandiose representations in the sculpture of Persepolis and the architecture of that site, and in Susa as Darius made known in several inscriptions.

The whole flat area of the site from the tomb to the hill is crossed by an artificial stream derived from the river Pulvar. This surface of c. 100 ha is now interpreted as a park, a “paradise” (Greek *paradeisos*), a term of Old Persian origin (**paridaida*) and a Persian invention that the Greek authors admired in various places of the empire, but not in Pasargadae, which was unknown to them until Alexander’s conquest (Boucharlat 2011). According to their testimonies the Persian paradise is a place with vegetation, of very variable dimensions, and various functions, such as orchards or gardens, or for recreation or crop production (garden, orchard, hunting park, zoos) (Tuplin 1996: pp. 80–131). At Pasargadae, the British and later Iranian excavations have revealed in the central part of the park a place very precisely planned by stone water-courses forming a rectangle of 250 × 150 m (the south side is lacking); they are surrounded on three sides by another series of stone canals. A square basin (0.90 m a side and 0.50 m deep) is set at a regular distance of 14 m. The upper part has partly preserved the slot of a sluice aiming to regulate the water flow and allowing dipping for irrigation. Beyond this central garden, series of parallel or perpendicular anomalies detected by geomagnetic survey likely correspond to a network of fences and ditches organizing the space and made for distributing water in the park (Benech et al. 2012). As a matter of fact, the Greek authors (Str. XV 3.7; Arr. VI 29.4–9) actually mention a “paradise” around the tomb of Cyrus, but they do not specify its extension. They quoted the “eye witnesses,” Alexander’s companions, who may not have visited the whole site.

Beyond Tall-i Takht-i Solaiman hill, geomagnetic surveys have recently recognized a series of large, regularly oriented buildings partly covering the 20 ha of the depression which was protected by a mudbrick rempart. The function of these buildings, up to 40 m long, remains to be established: were they for housing workers, the administration, or the guard? And which date?

The surface reconnaissance and rescue excavations in the surroundings of Pasargadae between 1999 and 2009 revealed that Cyrus' project for his residence greatly exceeded the limits of the site with a development within a radius of over 20 km. Upstream, several dams were built across the Pulvar river and its tributaries. These dykes, measuring several hundred meters long, are made of earth reinforced with unhewn stones. Two of them located at 2000 m above sea level show a sophisticated control device consisting of a wide conduit over 1 m high, divided into six small channels that can be closed by sluices. This technology is perhaps borrowed from Assyria or Urartu, but developed with Lydian-Ionian stone techniques, very similar to the monuments of Pasargadae (2 m long blocks joined by the anathyrosis technique and carefully polished on the visible faces; use of iron clamps). These dams were not used to irrigate the restricted surface nearby but were primarily intended to regulate the flow of the river, especially during the flash floods which may happen in winter and spring. At the same time, they might have retained water for summertime.

The aforementioned other function was performed by the canals, which to the south of the tomb of Cyrus run on both sides of the Pulvar river, extending respectively over 10 km and 17 km. They are partly cut into the rock in the narrowing of the valley, partly built on an earth and stone levee. These canals were managed for irrigating the wider part of the valley downstream (9 × 3 km). On the left bank, the canal supplied water to a small residence, a multiroom pavilion with two opposite porticoes. In the valley, several farms, a village, and an area protected by an enclosure were excavated in 2005–2007 by an international project on behalf of the Persepolis Pasargadae Research Foundation (Boucharlat et al. 2009). These varied structures reflect the development of this region in the Achaemenid period and give an idea of the agricultural activities, echoing pieces of information provided by the inscribed clay tablets of Persepolis.

Persepolis, a Permanent Building Site

Located 40 km as the crow flies south of Pasargadae, Persepolis was built on the eastern side of a lower but larger plain than Pasargadae at 1600 m above sea level. The most impressive part of the site is the huge stone terrace supporting numerous columned buildings (Figures 15.4 and 70.2), visible from far away. At 6 km northward, four royal tombs are carved into a cliff. Both places were known by travelers sporadically between the fourteenth and sixteenth century, and visited by almost all travelers from the seventeenth century until the first archeologists at the turn of the twentieth century. The terrace was largely excavated before World War II by an expedition of the



Figure 15.4 Persepolis, aerial view of terrace from north-northeast. Source: Reproduced by permission of the Joint Iran–France Mission at Persepolis; photography B.N. Chagny.

University of Chicago, directed by Ernst Herzfeld between 1931 and 1934, then Erich F. Schmidt between 1935 and 1939. After the war, Iranian teams continued investigations at the foot of the terrace and on the top of Kuh-i Rahmat mountain, while architectural remains scattered in the plain were cleared out by salvage excavations, undertaken with the help of Italian restorers (1965–1979). Since 2002, the reactivation of the Persepolis Pasargadae Research Foundation has revived the restoration and protection of monuments and the exploration of the plain. Geomagnetic surveys by an Iranian–French expedition (2005–2008) provided fresh information on less visible remains, and from 2008 an Iranian–Italian mission commenced a series of soundings west of the terrace. Since 2011 this mission has undertaken excavation on a small mound which corresponds to a monumental gate. Built of mudbrick walls resting on baked bricks, the gate offers a plan (presumably measuring 39.07×29.06 m), very similar to the Ishtar Gate in Babylon; moreover, it is decorated with panels of glazed relief bricks similar in style and iconography to pre-Achaemenid Babylonian walls (bull, monster called *mush-khussu*). The gate should date between Cyrus’ conquest of Babylon (539 BCE) and Darius’ early reign, an early date confirmed by a piece of inscription prior to the Achaemenid Elamite language of the later period at Persepolis (Askari Chaverdi et al. 2017). Such a discovery supposes the presence of other royal constructions nearby, as it is in Pasargadae.

Persepolis, the royal residence and center of the satrapy of Persia, was to be a major population center that can be seen according to the semi-concentric circles: first the Royal Quarter, whose central point is the terrace; around this area the city within 4–6 km to Naqsh-e Rostam north via the west and to the south. Beyond this half-circle, the plain of Persepolis was developed to sustain the permanent population of the city and the thousands of people to be accommodated during the stays of the great king (family, court, guards, scribes, etc.). Benefiting from rather good natural resources, the plain was developed during the Achaemenid period, as evinced by hydraulic works more than by secondary towns or settlements, which have not been much located.

The Royal Quarter is not restricted to the famous terrace, 8–14 m high covering 12 ha and supporting some 20 buildings. It includes two other areas, one to the south, at the plain level, the so-called Southern Quarter with stone buildings, covering nearly 10 ha (Mousavi 2012: pp. 26–41), and one to the east, the steep slope of the Kuh-e Rahmat mountain overlooking the terrace and crowned by a line of mudbrick fortifications with towers (Figure 70.2). Protection on the west side of the terrace is less visible, a wall running from north to south, parallel to the retaining wall of the terrace. The “third enclosure” mentioned by Diod. Sic. XVII (71, 4–6) remains to be found (Mousavi 1992). Altogether the Royal Quarter covered almost 30 ha, it is only part of Parsa (Old Persian) “[the City] Persia” or “of Persians,” since Parsa is also the name given to the country of Persia itself.

Since Schmidt’s excavations (1953, 1957, 1970) the terrace and monuments have been described at length. It should be noted that the names of the various buildings are those given by archeologists and rarely those specified in the inscriptions, except *hadiš*, “seat,” or “residence,” which probably means residential building. *Tačara* is more uncertain, perhaps “house.” The most impressive building, not named in the inscriptions, is commonly called Apadana, by reference to a very similar structure in Susa which is so called in an inscription. Other names are descriptive, such as Hall of 100 Columns, east of the Apadana, with the main hall broader than this but without portico, or Hall of 32 Columns, Central Building. The term Harem is without any ground, while Treasury, storehouse, refers to the plans of rooms, and objects, often luxurious, found in many of them, including stone mortars, most of which are inscribed in Aramaic and sometimes mention “treasurers.”

The present-day remains represent Persepolis terrace as Alexander left it after he put fire to it in 330. Only a small part in the southwest quarter was repaired or maintained in the late fourth or third centuries. At Darius’ time most of the terrace was empty. He built the terrace itself, a task of several years, by cutting into the mountain, keeping the natural rock in places and reusing the extracted blocks to build the retaining wall in cyclopean masonry. The original access was on the south side, next to which Darius had engraved

four different inscriptions, two in Old Persian (DPd-e),¹ one in Elamite (DPf) which mentions the construction of the terrace and some buildings, and one in Babylonian (DPg) mentioning people who contributed to the construction.

Then Darius built the Apadana and his palace almost attached to it, which is the best preserved monument of Persepolis (Jacobs 1997). He erected the Treasury, the plan for which changed several times. These buildings take up the tradition of the pillared halls of Pasargadae but expanding them and changing them into a more complex layout. The central columned halls are usually square instead of the rectangular plan of Pasargadae. Unlike the Mesopotamian compact architecture of the palaces, the Persepolis buildings are separated from each other but not distant as they are in Pasargadae; each of most of them is built on a platform 1–2.60 m high. The Apadana is the most grandiose expression of the Achaemenid architecture: a square building of 110 m a side on a 2.60 m high podium. The columned hall, 53 m a side, counts six rows of six fluted columns resting on a square base and supporting a composite capital topped by two adorsed bull protomae. None of them is complete, raising the question of the direction of the protomae. The traditional reconstruction showing the lateral side of the bull in the porticoes (Krefter 1971: Beilage 3–4), as they are on the facade of the royal tombs, may be an artistic convention; a front position is quite plausible (Seidl 2003). The latter supported cedar beams from Lebanon. On three sides, the main hall is surrounded by columned porticoes with two rows of six columns resting on bell-shaped bases. The south side consists of a series of small rooms with a main corridor in the middle leading to Darius' palace. The porticoes are flanked by corner towers which contain several rooms at ground level and probably an upper story and a staircase to reach the roof. In the northeast and southwest corners of the audience hall, foundation deposits were discovered beneath the walls: two sheets of gold and silver bearing a trilingual text (DPh), together with gold, silver, and copper coins. The north and east porticoes are approached by stairways composed of four symmetrically arranged flights of steps. Their facades are covered with reliefs at eye level. Both stairways bear the same kind of figures. The central panel originally represented the king sitting on his throne giving audience to an official. Probably under Xerxes, both reliefs were removed to the Treasury and replaced by a series of guards. One side of the staircase is decorated with files of guards, followed by court members. The other side shows 23 tribute bearing delegations (cf. Chapter 94 Statuary and Relief).

The plan of Darius' palace is the archetype for the later buildings of his successors: a single portico flanked by guardrooms, a square hypostyle hall, with symmetrical series of rooms on the lateral sides and other rooms at the rear side. Xerxes and Artaxerxes would extend this layout for their own palaces.

The fortifications on the north and east sides of the terrace were built during Darius' reign and probably completed later. In two small rooms of the north fortifications, thousands of inscribed clay tablets, administrative documents, were discovered in 1933 (see Chapter 7 Elamite Sources). The remote location of these archives (Persepolis Fortification Tablets covering Darius' reign between 509 and 494 BCE) is still puzzling (Hallock 1969; Henkelman 2008).

The only visible architecture today at Persepolis is made of stone, but the buildings were made of clay, mudbricks, and baked bricks for the walls (5 m thick in the Apadana). Actually stone is limited to the column bases, door frames, actual and blind windows, staircases, and wall reliefs. Stone column shafts and capitals are restricted to the Apadana, the Hall of 100 Columns and All Nations Gate. The other columned buildings are equipped with wood poles coated with plaster and painted. Stone was extracted from quarries nearby, one being immediately north of the terrace, others located on a slope near Naqsh-e Rostam or at 5–10 km from the terrace. The most distant quarry, more than 30 km northwest of the terrace, provided a better quality used for sculpture.

Almost nothing was completed at the death of Darius in 486 BCE. That situation raises two questions. One concerns the location of official audiences and meetings during most of his reign; the other one is the type of buildings where the king and the court lived. Even in later periods, only some buildings on the terrace are really adapted to accommodate the king and his family and the court, namely a large part of the so-called Harem, which was not built until Xerxes, and, according to some hypotheses, the southern side of the Apadana where apartments could have been located on an upper story (Huff 2010 and other articles by Huff quoted there).

Xerxes completed his father's major buildings, erected the "All Countries" Gate to the north, and added his *hadiš*, today poorly preserved, in the south. He, or maybe his son, Artaxerxes I, began the Hall of 100 Columns and the smaller Hall of 32 Columns. Artaxerxes also built his own palace, to the southwest. The following kings were less active, but they may have enlarged or altered buildings, or removed pieces of them without signing their work with an inscription. Artaxerxes III (359–338 BCE) is the latest known builder for a staircase at the palace H and another one to the west of the palace of Darius (on function of the terrace, cf. Chapter 70 The Residences).

The terrace and the royal necropolis of Naqsh-e Rostam belong to the same project. As shown by the remains of stone architecture scattered west and north of the terrace, and the results of archeological surveys since 2000, the whole area between the two sites must be considered as Parsa that extended over some 20 km² (Tilia 1978: pp. 73–91). The spatial organization of this vast area consists of discrete concentrations of artifacts or structures, likely

corresponding to different social classes. An elite – or royal? – residential area about 3 km west of the terrace covers dozens of acres. It consists of low and small tepes separated from each other by several hundred meters. Blocks of hewn stone, and in one case a mural of glazed bricks, are still visible on many of them. These mounds probably correspond to large mudbrick buildings, surrounded by gardens. Such elite areas probably also existed north and northwest and perhaps in the south. Clearly separated from these areas are other large patches marked by pottery sherds on the surface, without visible traces of architecture. They should be the living quarters and workshops of more mundane people, and barracks of numerous workers employed for the construction of the royal buildings. One of these patches is particularly noticeable about 1 km west of the terrace. The location of the encampment of the guard is not localized but should rather consist of tents. The geomagnetic survey shows some anomalies corresponding to ditches and maybe some walls which are the flimsy remains of these settlements. Altogether, in the vast area between the terrace and the necropolis, the non-built spaces were the majority. However, they may correspond to managed landscape with orchards, large gardens, or parks.

The plain of Persepolis extends over some 100 km from north to south and 30 km at its greatest extension in the central part. In the southern half, the soil is today very salty, as it was in the past, according to analyses. It contrasts with the central part near the terrace and the northern one most intensively occupied from the Neolithic to the late second millennium BCE. After a gap of several centuries, the plain is again developed during the Achaemenid period and later.

Soil quality and irrigation possibilities make the plain a fertile region, which has negative consequences. Modern mechanized agricultural development provoked the disappearance of many witnesses of the ancient occupation. A multiperiod survey of this plain in 1968–1969 showed a rather low ratio of Achaemenid settlements, generally small in size (Sumner 1986). According to a survey conducted 40 years later, nearly half of these few settlements have been destroyed (Boucharlat et al. 2012). The best evidence of the Achaemenid and post-Achaemenid occupation consists of irrigation canals, the largest of which measured several kilometers, dams of earth and rough stone, and sometimes structures made of cut stone. Here and there isolated stone architectural elements have been reported, drums or column bases, but they have not been found in place. Some are unfinished, witnessing activity traces of transport between the quarries and Persepolis.

The image of Persepolis city offered by archeology does not contradict the description by Diod. Sic. (XVII.70, 3–5), which mentions the mansions that the army of Alexander plundered before reaching the terrace. However, the image of the occupation of the plain is quite poor in comparison with the

agriculture and craft activities evidenced by the Persepolis Fortification Tablets (see Chapter 62 Persia). The latter mention these places as estates and a few cities, which could explain the apparent lack of important archeological remains in the plain.

In southern Fars, occupation of the Achaemenid period was observed in a few places corresponding to elite buildings. Farmeshgān, 60 km south of Shiraz (Figure 70.1), a group of four stone platforms almost juxtaposed, measuring between 6.50 m and 10 m a side, is one example. Very little is known of this unexcavated site, but fragments of bas-reliefs were found on the surface, a spear-holder guard, rosettes, and a high relief of a lion. The use of the toothed chisel for working the stone indicates Darius I's time or later.

Near Fasa, 170 km southeast of Shiraz and near Darab, some stone bell-shaped bases of Persepolis type and ceramic material have been found which point to important Achaemenid occupations (Hansman 1975). The whole southern region to the Persian Gulf suffers from a hot and dry climate, creating an arid environment. Sparsely populated before the Achaemenid period, the region is more densely occupied from the early centuries CE on. The settlements are no longer concentrated along the perennial streams but extend higher on the slopes. In my opinion, this change is due to the introduction of a new irrigation technique, the underground water draining galleries. Very likely since the late Iron Age these shallow galleries were subterranean derivations from streams but did not tap the deeper water table. For the Achaemenid period we know only of galleries in Egypt tapping permanent water resources (Wuttmann 2001). This famous technique, called *qanāt* or *karīz*, permitted the occupation of more semi-arid and arid areas. However, despite Polybius X. 28, it is not yet clear whether the qanat technique was actually used in Iran and particularly in Fars as early as the Achaemenid period (Boucharlat 2001, 2017).

Human occupation is restricted to oases, such as the Borazjān at 70 km from Bushehr on the Persian Gulf shore. Royal stone buildings were found in different places today embedded within palm groves (Zehbari 2020). One of these palaces was excavated in 1970 southwest of the modern city. A hypostyle hall of 18 m in length at Sang-i Siah consists of two rows of six column bases, two-stepped square plinths, the lower made of a black and a white stone, the upper with white stone topped by a black torus. They are similar in color and size to those of Palace S of Pasargadae (a square of 1.10 m and 1.16 m, respectively). The hall is surrounded by four porticoes with two rows of bases; the eastern portico with 14 bases extends beyond the hall as at Palace P at Pasargadae. Another pillared building with one similar columned portico was excavated in 2005 at Bardak Siah, 12 km northwest of Borazjan, with bicolored stone bases. The rectangular hall exhibits four rows of six bases. In these palaces, there is no evidence of stone column shafts. In the latter an inscribed

fragment in Babylonian and a fragment of bas-relief showing the head and shoulder of a king under an umbrella with a servant were found. On one hand the column bases recall those of Pasargadae buildings, on the other hand the sculpture is reminiscent of Darius' reliefs at Persepolis. These constructions could have been begun by Cyrus and completed in Darius' time.

Western Fars and the Persepolis-Susa Road

This part of the province is still in the uplands (approx. 1000m above sea level) and has more favorable climate and water resources than southern Fars. This area was on the way between the two royal residences, Persepolis and Susa (600km), but archeology so far has failed to identify any of the 20 supply stations that were to be installed on the road for accommodating groups of travelers, the king and his retinue when he was visiting his "countries," messengers, troops, groups of nobles, and workers (Hallock 1969; Koch 1990). For example, the transfer of workers between the residences at Persepolis and Susa (Briant 2013) is attested only by Persepolis tablets. These buildings, probably made of mudbrick, did not leave many traces. However, this area is gradually revealing architectural remains of noble or royal residences in the form of stone column bases in different parts of the foothills. A region around the modern town of Nurabad seems particularly privileged. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries bell-shaped bases decorated with palm leaves, similar to those of Persepolis, were identified. After soundings by a Japanese expedition in 1959, it was not until 2006 that the site of Qaleh Kali was again investigated by an Iranian–Australian microregional and multiperiod project. Excavations (Potts et al. 2009) cleared more column bases which belong to a portico. Floors, stairs, and parapets are also made of worked stones. More importantly, this building was not isolated. In the same area, other buildings, palaces or pavilions, have recently been located, as evinced by some stone column bases. Dating to the Achaemenid period is assumed on the ground of the shape and the techniques of working stone and some artifacts, though they are often mixed with more recent objects. These strongly built constructions were not destroyed in the fall of the Persian Empire and were reoccupied in the next few centuries.

The Foothills and the Eastern Plain of Khūzestān

These areas were certainly important in the first millennium BCE, during Neo-Elamite kingdoms which correspond to the period of the penetration of Iranian populations. The meeting of these populations created an acculturation

which is called the “Persian ethno-genesis,” from which later emerged the Achaemenid dynasty (Briant 1984; Miroschedji 1985; Henkelman 2008; Álvarez-Mon and Garrison 2011). But the terms of this acculturation remain poorly known due to the lack of archeological evidence. For the first half of the sixth century BCE, only few graves of the elite were found incidentally, one in Arjān, near the town of Behbehān (Álvarez-Mon 2010), and another in 2007 near the town of Ram Hurmuz, to the west in the plain, whose luxurious furniture is still very little known (see Chapter 27). For the Achaemenid period, column bases show the existence of elite or royal residences. As an example, 5 of 18 column bases, belonging to a pillared hall of an Achaemenid palace or pavilion, were discovered near Ram Hurmuz in 2009.

Susa, the Choice of Darius Between Persepolis and Babylon

Susa is the most famous Persian residence known by the Greek authors (see Aeschylus, *The Persians* narrating the defeat of Salamis in 480 BCE; see e.g. Aesch., Pers. 16, 534-6, 730, 761). The palace of Darius differs from that of Persepolis in many respects, although the audience hall, called Apadana in a royal inscription, has obvious similarities with that of Persepolis. Susa is located in a vast plain crossed by several perennial rivers that allowed the early development of irrigation systems comparable to those of Mesopotamia. The plain and Susa itself suffered a significant population decline in the first half of the first millennium BCE after a flourishing period in the second millennium (Potts 2015: pp. 259–308). Permanent settlement in the plain during the Achaemenid period was relatively small, as it was in the Persepolis plain, and there was almost nothing around Susa itself between the Karkheh and Dez rivers. One hypothesis suggests that Darius, in deciding to install one of his residences in the old Elamite city, may have displaced the indigenous population that lived there and in the surrounding villages.

The limits Darius gave to Susa are defined by a massive mudbrick steep glacis, 18 m high, with no real defensive wall, enclosing 70 ha (Figure 15.5). Only one gate was found to the east, built of mudbrick. The inner space of the city is surprisingly empty apart from the royal quarter to the north. The whole empty space south of the palace was extensively explored by a long-term French expedition, with no results for the Achaemenid period, despite huge works in the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century under M. Dieulafoy, J. de Morgan, R. de Mecquenem and R. Ghirshman. Much more precise research conducted by J. Perrot from 1969 to 1979 unearthed only flimsy remains.

The palace is set on a 12 ha area (to be compared with the 12 ha of the Persepolis terrace) on the Apadana hill (Figure 15.6). Other buildings on the

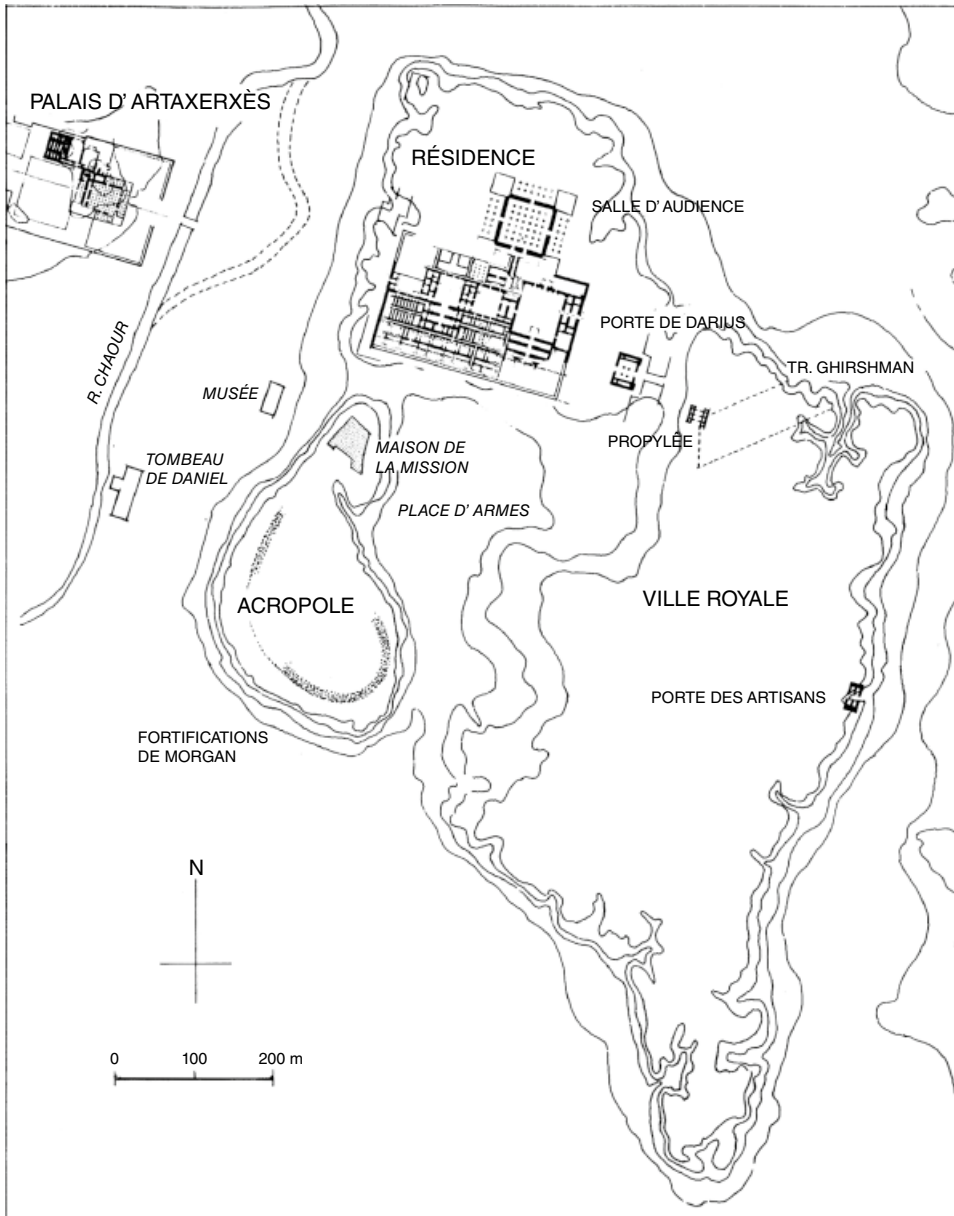


Figure 15.5 Site map of Susa. Source: Reproduced by permission of Remy Boucharlat and Danielle Perrot.

northwestern part of the “Royal City” hill (as the first French excavators coined it) also belong to the palace complex. To the southwest, the higher “Acropolis” hill was crowned by a poorly preserved Achaemenid period (?) mudbrick wall, 6–8 m thick, overlooking the palace.

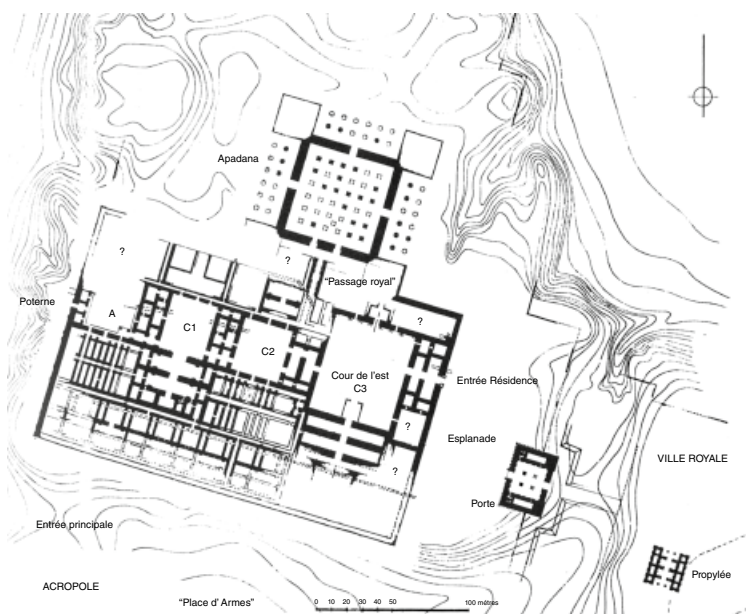


Figure 15.6 Susa, Palace of Darius. Source: Reproduced by permission of Remy Boucharlat and Danielle Perrot.

The palace is a compound of independent buildings (Ladiray 2013). Darius leveled the two hills to a constant 18 m above the plain (to be compared with the Persepolis retaining wall which was 12–14 m high). To extend the surface of the Apadana tell, the earth dug from the summit was moved to the slopes, creating a terrace. Walls and columns are set on a 10 m deep foundation made of gravel. The mudbrick walls rest on two courses of baked bricks. Stone is much less used than in Persepolis, for the mountains are 50 km away and most of the architecture belongs to the Mesopotamian tradition. Worked stone is restricted to bases, shafts, and capitals of columns. The stone bas-reliefs are not used in Darius' palace; the walls of the courtyards of the residence made extensive use of siliceous glazed brick panels, now in the Louvre Museum. Many of them depict a file of guards, others show lions, griffins, and antithetical sphinxes. The colors include brown, light green, yellow, white, sometimes cobalt blue, usually with gray-black outlines.

Inside the royal city the visitor first arrives at a building forming a monumental gate, called Propylaeum. It consists of two oblong contiguous rooms opening on two opposed porticoes with two square bases of columns. They bear an inscription in the name of Xerxes (XSa). The royal way then crosses the 14 m deep valley which separates the Ville Royale from the Apadana mound by a causeway bridge made of mudbrick boxes filled with earth. Here, the visitor is in front of the Gate of Darius.

The gate is a monumental building, 40 × 30 m, with a tetrastyle hall, like that of the All Countries Gate in Persepolis; it stands isolated from any other structure as in Persepolis. It is the symbolic passage between the outside and the inside of the palace. The gate is flanked by side rooms and stairwells leading to the roof. The square column bases bear an inscription in the name of Darius made by Xerxes (XSd). The passageway toward the palace was very likely flanked by two statues, of which only one was found in place. Apart from some fragments of at least two other statues previously found, this is the sole example of a human sculpture in the round so far known in the Achaemenid period. Originally, the statue was placed in Egypt, along the canal dug out by Darius (Yoyotte 2013: pp. 241–279). Later Xerxes brought it to Susa and placed the statue at the Gate that his father had left unfinished (Figure 94.8; cf. Chapter 94 Statuary and Relief).

The poorly preserved Apadana hall is very similar to the great hypostyle hall at Persepolis. A few column bases are not in place but their location is visible thanks to the stone foundation. The walls are marked only by the layout of the foundation trenches. Bull protomae of capitals also show the similarity with Persepolis. The column bases in the north part of the hall bore an inscription in situ of Artaxerxes II, who claims to have repaired this “Apadana” built by Darius and burned during the reign of his grandfather, Artaxerxes I. This is the only case in Achaemenid architecture where the term Apadana is directly associated with an existing building. The porticoes on three sides go out onto

open space, while the fourth side consists of a series of rooms and especially a perpendicular passage leading to the residence, as in Persepolis.

To the south, Darius' residence occupies 4 ha, built on a totally non-Persian plan but following Mesopotamian and Elamite traditions (Figure 15.6). The general scheme is organized around three main courtyards plus a small one (five courtyards in Nebuchadnezzar's palace in Babylon) that give light to the rooms and facilitate the circulation, as in the Mesopotamian palaces. The residence was entirely made of mudbrick on two courses of baked brick. The huge blocks in which are set the bronze doors' sockets are the only stone elements, often made of discarded column drums.

The reconstruction of the different parts and their function (Ladiray 2013: pp. 200–203; Perrot 2013: pp. 229–236) emphasizes increasingly controlled access from the eastern outer entrance toward the king's apartment opening on the western courtyard. The plan of the apartment with two parallel oblong rooms is a replica of the throne room in the Neo-Assyrian palace at Nineveh, and later in Babylon. In Susa, at the rear side the king's bedroom is added. At both sides of the entrance to that small room were buried the famous foundation tablets, square stone slabs of 33 cm a side, inscribed on all six sides, one in Elamite (DSz) and the other in Babylonian (DSaa). The two texts differ from each other. Darius symbolically describes the contribution of all peoples of the empire to provide rough materials, to carry them from their origin to Susa, and to build the palace. Copies of these texts, the originals of which were not visible, and the fragments of the Old Persian version were found in stone and bricks in several areas of Susa (Vallat 2013: pp. 281–293). The other royal inscriptions mainly belong to Darius and Xerxes.

The other kings who left several inscriptions are Darius II and above all Artaxerxes II in the first half of the fifth century. Not only did he rebuild, or repair, the Apadana hall but he erected a new palace on the other bank of the Shaur river that extends over 4 ha. The main part is a columned hall of six rows of six stone column bases, with painted wooden shafts. In that hall were found the only so far known wall paintings depicting half-size human figures. Amongst the pigments used, to be noted is the cinnabar for red. A few stone slabs showing small-size servants similar to those carved on the reliefs of different buildings at Persepolis were found in that palace as well as at the southern tip of the Ville Royale (Boucharlat 2013: pp. 371–395).

Cult Places and Burial Customs

On these archeological remains, we are very poorly informed. We have an idea of several deities worshipped in this region from the contents of dozens of Persepolis tablets. They mention food to sanctuaries of Elamite, Babylonian,

and Persian deities (Henkelman 2008). None of the corresponding places is known, but those places did exist, despite Herodotus I, 121 who had said that places of worship for the Persians were under the open sky.

Hypotheses have been put forward to recognize places of ritual ceremonies in some buildings of the Persepolis terrace, related to religion and/or to the dynastic cult, since the king is the intermediary between men and gods. This reinterpretation (Razmjou 2010: pp. 231–245) speculates that most buildings would be concerned, especially those called “palaces” by archeologists, given the representations of “offerings bearers,” who would be priests and servants bringing liquids and small animals for sacrifice. A single case of ritual seems convincing, near Darius’ *tačara*. The western flight of stairs has been adapted to manage a small room containing a pool of 30 m² and a small canal. Such an installation is suitable for ritual libations or liquid offerings.

Places for funeral ceremonies must have existed near royal tombs like that of Cyrus at Pasargadae. This is suggested, for example, by Arrian, who mentions one horse per month as a sacrifice to Cyrus (Arr. VI, 29.4–7). No installation is visible near the tomb in this unexcavated area, which has been severely disturbed. Four tablets from the Persepolis Fortification Archive mention sacrifices near installations called *šumar* (probably meaning grave), one for Cambyses, perhaps near Niriz, 100 km east of Persepolis (Henkelman 2003), another for a certain Hystaspes, who may be identified with some probability with the father of Darius. The latter building may be recognized in the platform halfway between Persepolis and Naqsh-e Rostam, but the only related building there is a columned hall. The sacred area of barely excavated Naqsh-e Rostam remains unknown; the only candidate there for a religious or funeral building is the Ka’ba-ye Zardosht. This stone tower erected in front of the cliff is an exact replica of the Zendan-e Solaiman tower at Pasargadae. The assumptions on the function of the two towers, which contain a very small room without windows in the upper part, have been brilliantly disputed – tomb or shrine? – without decisive argument. A third attractive but rather vague hypothesis is that the tower of Naqsh-e Rostam was erected by Darius for preserving the royal insignia (Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1983).

The only known graves of this period are the freestanding monument of Cyrus at Pasargadae, the rock-cut graves of Darius and his three successors carved into the 60 m high cliff at Naqsh-e Rostam, and the tombs of Artaxerxes II and III overlooking the Persepolis terrace. A cemetery excavated by E.F. Schmidt north of Persepolis contained dozens of individual burials in pits or in clay coffins, but they are usually dated to the late or rather the post-Achaemenid period. A unique grave was discovered in 2009 at the foot of the Persepolis terrace. A skeleton in a flexed position was put into a brick-walled pit and covered by two courses of mudbricks. The few items accompanying the dead have not yet been published.

An Achaemenid tomb was found at Susa, dating from the fifth or the middle of the fourth century. A brick vault protected a bronze sarcophagus. It had preserved the skeleton surrounded by rich grave goods, including gold and bronze jewelry, and semiprecious stones for torque, bracelet, necklaces, earrings, a silver bowl, and two alabstra (Frank 2013). As in Persepolis, it is hardly understandable that this royal residence, which was occupied throughout the Achaemenid period, has not left traces of other graves. Mazdaism, a religion which recommends the exposure of the bodies to prey birds, does not suffice to explain the absence of elite or mundane graves. There is no evidence that this religion or the Zoroastrian reform reached these areas, not even the royal family, whose members are apparently buried and probably mummified; moreover, it is certain that the other contemporaneous religions requested different burying customs.

Artifacts

The excavations or surveys of Achaemenid sites in southwest Iran were rather disappointing regarding the artifacts. The immense majority of the famous gold, silver, bronze vessels or jewelry kept in many museums in the world were not found in these royal or elite residences. Most of them come from the antiquities market or from chance discoveries (e.g. the Oxus Treasure). Very likely the Achaemenid residences were plundered during Alexander's conquest, and that is for sure at Persepolis.

Some stone vases were found in the Persepolis Treasury, together with pottery and metal objects, weapons, and tools (Schmidt 1957). At Pasargadae, an Achaemenid or post-Achaemenid treasure was found by chance near the bridge (Stronach 1978: pp. 168–177), while the excavations yielded pottery, bronze, and iron objects. From Susa, there are mainly the objects inside the so-called Princess grave, but a series of alabstra, often inscribed, has been found here and there on the site. A well has also provided a nice series of ivories carved in different regions of the empire, showing Persian, Syrian-Phoenician, Egyptian, and Greek styles (Amiet 2013: pp. 331–356).

The paucity of diagnostic objects is one of the main difficulties in identifying Achaemenid settlements. It should be noted that coinage is unknown in these regions until Alexander's conquest. Apart from the few coins from the Apadana foundation boxes, no coins have ever been found in the palaces, residences, and settlements which would have provided some chronological clues. Recent excavations, such as the Mamasani project near Nurabad (Potts et al. 2009) or the rescue excavations near Pasargadae, offer good opportunities to establish a chronology of the artifacts of the Achaemenid and later periods. In this respect, the archeology of the Achaemenid period, long devoted to the elite sites, remains in its infancy. The new excavations and survey projects will certainly greatly improve our knowledge in the near future.

NOTE

- 1 For the system of naming the Achaemenid inscriptions, see Chapter 6 The Inscriptions of the Achaemenids.

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CHAPTER 16

Media

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In the absence of any written records from pre-Achaemenid Media, and in the absence – until not very long ago – of any archeological evidence from the Median homeland that could be associated with the Medes in the 200 years that preceded Cyrus II's capture of the Median capital, Hagmatana (modern Hamadan), in 550 BCE, the Median Logos of Herodotus (1. 95–106) long remained the only readily available, seemingly broadly acceptable history of the ancient Medes. Thus, even if Herodotus' description of ancient Hagmatana was never taken to be anything but fanciful (cf. Herzfeld 1941: p. 200), most scholars were content – at least until the early 1980s – to accept the Herodotean portrayal of the Medes as the rulers of an extended empire that was somewhat similar in character and extent to the subsequent Achaemenid Persian realm. This general acceptance of the Herodotean version of Median history was influential, not least, in terms of the different areas of expertise that the Medes were presumed to have possessed. Such areas were thought to have included the maintenance of written records, an ability to carve bas-reliefs, and the necessary skills to create the first rock-cut tombs in Iran (cf. Ghirshman 1964: p. 89).

The unraveling of such suppositions began when it was discovered that the rock-cut tombs in Media were either late Achaemenid or post-Achaemenid in date (von Gall 1966) and that Herodotus' account of the history of Media (including his allusions to a Median royal house that dated as far back as the eighth century BCE) bore little relationship to the nature of events in western Iran that is reflected in the annals of Assyria (Helm 1981). Not long thereafter

the very existence of a Median empire came to be called into question – and even the presence of a short-lived, united Median kingdom came to be doubted (Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1988). More recently, it has been proposed that the Medes put an end to their “political formations” and reverted to a “stage of tribal pastoralism” during the last 60 years of their independent existence from c. 610 to 550 BCE (Liverani 2003: p. 9). For many scholars this last verdict is far from necessarily correct; and, from an archeological perspective, the evidence that stems from recent excavations and surveys serves to affirm that, in overarching terms, continued permanent settlement in Media did not end in the late seventh century BCE (cf. Stronach and Roaf 2007: p. 49). In addition, monumental construction appears to have persisted at various sites (Stronach 2003: p. 237) and an early form of money was apparently in use in the heart of Media at a date near 600 BCE (Vargyas 2008). In short, it is more than likely that a united Median kingdom managed to control a major part of northern Iran during at least the first half of the sixth century BCE (Stronach 2012a).

Of the material remains of the province of the same name that emerged as a successor to ancient Media in Achaemenid times (Jacobs 2005: pp. 449–450) we know remarkably little. A variety of classical sources states that Ecbatana – the name that the Greeks gave to Hagmatana, the capital of the province of Media – was one of the principal residences of the Achaemenid Persian kings (Xen., Cyr. 8.6.22; Xen., Anab. 3.5.15; Str. 11.13.5; Ath. 12.513; Curt. 10.4.3). Unfortunately, however, extensive excavations in the original core area of Hagmatana have so far failed to reveal any coherent Achaemenid remains. As we now know, this puzzling situation seems to have arisen because at some point in the second century BCE all pre-hellenistic strata in this key locality were removed in their entirety in order to permit certain late Seleucid or early Parthian barrack-like structures to be founded directly on virgin soil (Sarraf 2003; Boucharlat 2005: pp. 253–254; Stronach 2012b: p. 55). In these circumstances the best archeological evidence for the importance of Hagmatana in early Achaemenid times may be said to come from adjoining trilingual inscriptions in the names of Darius (522–486 BCE) and Xerxes (486–465 BCE) that were cut into an eastern rock spur of Mount Alvand (DEa and XEa), located a few kilometers to the southwest of the city (Lecoq 1997: pp. 126–127; Curtis 2000, illustration 43; *here* Figure 16.1). Whether or not this evident royal interest in the cool, forested foothills that flank the western side of the city could be thought to account for a notice in Pliny (HN 6.116), to the effect that “Ecbatana” was “transferred” to the mountains by Darius I, is difficult to say. An alternative possibility is that the inscriptions in question were merely placed on one of the more readily available, inviting rock surfaces that stood in the near vicinity of this vaunted Achaemenid capital.



Figure 16.1 Ganj Nameh, Inscriptions of Darius I (DEa) and Xerxes I (XEa).
Source: Reproduced by permission of Gian Pietro Basello – DARIOSH Project.

The best available indication of Achaemenid construction in Hagmatana comes from the local presence of a number of inscribed stone column bases (A²Ha, b, d), even if their exact, original context remains unknown (Knapton et al. 2001). One inscribed base in particular carries an Old Persian inscription (A²Hb) of Artaxerxes II (404–359 BCE) in which the king relates that he built an apadana – a palace – “of stone in its columns” (Kent 1953: p. 155). While this inscription forms part of the inscribed evidence of Achaemenid date that is often invoked in order to suggest that an apadana was erected at Hagmatana/Ecbatana (as was the case at Susa), it is also relevant to note that Polybius offers a detailed description of a local Persian palace that was still in existence in the days of Alexander (Polyb. 10.27; cf. Ctes., FGrH 688 F9). According to Polybius’ account, the woodwork of this structure was all of cedar and cypress, but no wooden surface was originally left exposed because every part was plated with either silver or gold. Polybius goes on to observe that “most of the precious metals were stripped off in the invasion of Alexander... and the rest during the reigns of Antigonos and Seleucus.” At the same time it would be arbitrary to conclude that certain inscribed stone elements, even when they bear inscriptions in the name of Artaxerxes II, should necessarily be associated with a palace or sanctuary in which this same monarch is said to have erected a statue of Anāhitā (Beros., FGrH. 680 F11; cf. Plut., Artax. 27.3; Isid. Char., FGrH 781 F2,6).

While there is a nearly complete dearth of scientifically excavated Achaemenid materials from Hamadan, the art market has not hesitated to invoke this same provenience for a wide range of objects, including both forgeries and other items that have come to light through clandestine operations (Muscarella 1980: pp. 31–35; cf. Chapter 105 *The Achaemenid Empire and Forgery: Material Culture*). Prominent among other objects with a dubious status are the well-known gold tablets with late Achaemenid inscriptions written in the names of Ariaramnes and Arsames (AmH and AsH: Schmitt 1999: pp. 105–111) as well as duplicates of the foundation texts that were found in the Apadana at Persepolis (DH*a*: Lecoq 1997: pp. 218–219; cf. the discussion of these items in Mousavi 2012: pp. 43–44 with n.121; see also Chapter 104 *Achaemenid Empire and Forgery: Inscriptions*).

The knowledge that we currently possess of the mud-brick architecture of Media in the seventh and early sixth centuries BCE (cf. Stronach and Roaf 2007: pp. 181–182) may begin to allow us to speculate on various aspects of the character of the smaller settlements that must have typified the province of Media in Achaemenid times. To start with, Media's absorption into the far-flung Achaemenid Empire must have produced an altogether new sense of security. As a result, people who had previously chosen to reside, if at all possible, on clearly defensible, rock outcrops or on the often considerable heights of long-established prehistoric mounds, would have not taken long to abandon such locations in favor of new habitations that stood at the same level as their orchards and fields. In these new conditions the main arbiter of location would have been the availability of water. And in many cases the recently available technology of the qanat (cf. Wilkinson 2012: pp. 16–27) was no doubt used to bring cool, clean water from distant, underground aquifers to the exact point where surface water was required.

While Achaemenid builders frequently included worked stone elements in major structures, we can be sure that everyday construction in the countryside would have largely depended on mud-bricks, mud-brick struts and wood. In addition, it is important to note that, while the standard mud-brick in independent Media was oblong in shape and measured c. 40×24×12 cm in size, the Achaemenids introduced a smaller, square mud-brick that was normally 34×34×12 cm in size. Indeed, it is changes in brick sizes – not to mention subtle changes in pottery – that will no doubt ultimately allow archeologists to plot the still missing patterns of rural settlement that must have characterized the broad plains of Media in Achaemenid times (cf. Boucharlat 2005; Curtis 2005).

As to the likely appearance of the settlements in question, most villages were presumably characterized by a preponderance of flat-roofed, single-storied houses. Also, on the evidence of not-too-far-distant rock-cut tombs of the late fourth/early third centuries BCE, certain of the houses may well have been

marked by porticoes with elegant wooden ceilings and two or more wooden columns (cf. especially Herzfeld 1941: fig. 312).

Since archeobotanical studies of the excavated Median and Parthian plant remains from Tepe Nush-i Jan indicate that emmer, bread wheat and barley were grown in both these periods (Kylo and Hubbard 1981), it is only logical to suppose that these same cereals were among those that were cultivated locally in the interval between these periods. Parallel studies of the animal bone sample from the Median and Parthian settlements at Tepe Nush-i Jan are also informative. In both Median and Parthian times cattle remained the main source of meat. The real revelation, however, is the very varied character of the local horse population in these two periods. In this context the bone sample indicates that the famed pastures of Media were home to (i) large, heavy horses (with a withers height of over 150 cm), to (ii) horses of a median size (with a withers height of 135–137 cm), as well as to (iii) a miniature form of horse (such as very possibly represents an independent breed) with an average withers height of only 105–110 cm (Bökönye 1978: p. 28).

With reference to the extent to which Achaemenid art and architecture can be said to be indebted to prior Median achievements, it has recently been suggested that the innovative columned halls of eighth/seventh century Media may not have had quite such a strong influence on the evolution of the famed columned halls of Pasargadae and Persepolis as was once imagined (Gopnik 2010: p. 196). On the other hand it is clear that a number of motifs that are found in the monumental mud-brick architecture of Media eventually re-emerged as elegant designs, rendered both in stone and in other materials, in various late sixth-century and later Achaemenid contexts (Roaf 2010). Since certain of these motifs are first found on the walls of the central temple at Tepe Nush-i Jan, and since they would seem to re-appear on occasion in equally numinous settings, it is all the more interesting to note that the stepped portion of the mud-brick fire altar from the central temple (Stronach and Roaf 2007: fig. 2.13) almost certainly finds an echo in the stepped upper and lower extremities of the characteristic Achaemenid stone altar – actual examples of which were encountered at Pasargadae (Stronach 1978: fig. 72).

Aside from being masters of construction in mud-brick, as well as redoubtable riders – and breeders – of horses, the Medes appear to have been celebrated, in the Achaemenid period especially, for their skills in metalworking. This is evident, not least, from a glance at the choice gifts of precious metal that are displayed by the Median delegation in the parade of subject peoples that adorns the carved socle of the Apadana at Persepolis (Schmidt 1953: pl. 27). On the other hand, the fact that Darius I chose to depict his Persian subjects in the bas-reliefs at Persepolis in two separate forms of dress (perhaps best defined as a voluminous “court dress” and a more tight-fitting “riding dress”) can no longer be used to support a never very convincing suggestion

that those individuals in riding dress were all Medes and that, accordingly, the Medes shared the governance of the Achaemenid empire with the Persians (see, e.g. Stronach 2011: p. 477).

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CHAPTER 17

Babylonia and Assyria

Walter Kuntner and Sandra Heinsch

The archeological evidence for Achaemenid rule over Herodotus' ninth satrapy can be described as decidedly wanting, compared to relevant historical sources. Few are, in fact, the architectural remains possessed of Achaemenid imperial character¹ that can be found within this territory. In this paper, it consists of the historical regions of Babylonia and Assyria conveniently demarcated by the frontiers of modern Iraq and tentatively partitioned according to Xenophon's Median Wall (Gasche 1995).

The most prominent finding is without doubt the Perserbau abutting the Südburg in Babylon (cf. Figure 70.4). This annex has been dated differently by various scholars: either to the reign of Artaxerxes II on the grounds of epigraphic evidence, or to the reign of Darius I on the basis of the red-colored finish of the rubble-and-gravel floor. The closely related issue of the Anbauhof complex of the Südburg (Figure 17.1), as possible additional evidence of an Achaemenid imprint, has received less attention, despite the more far-reaching consequences it might have for our understanding of Achaemenid Babylonia (Gasche 2010). Gasche's approach discusses firstly the characteristic layout of this complex's reception suite (RS), whose congruence with the RS of Darius I's palace at Susa (Figure 15.6) led him to suggest the re-dating of the Anbauhof to that king's reign. Secondly, he calls attention to the RSs' openings, onto the courts of the Anbauhof and Westhof respectively, occurring with only minor variation in all three palaces in Babylon, yet which are missing at Susa. This fact additionally prompted Gasche to take into consideration the re-dating of the Westhof complex to the reign of Cyrus the Great, and thus to

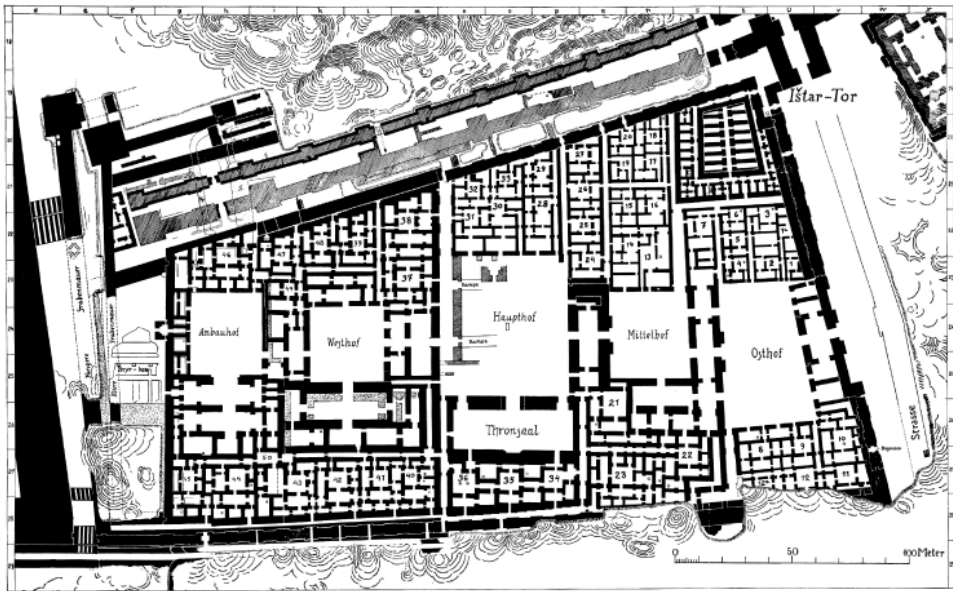


Figure 17.1 The so-called *Südburg* of Babylon.

propose a new chronological framework for the architectural history of the palaces of Babylon (cf. Amiet 2010).

The problematic aspect in Gasche's (2010: p. 458) reasoning is the assumption that the occupation layer of the rebuilt Anbauhof complex was once raised together with that of the Westhof complex, in order to merge with the uppermost pavings of the court of Nebuchadnezzar II's Haupthof (henceforth shortened as Nebuchadnezzar). In fact, based on this assumption, he considers the brick rubble containing the Neriglissar cylinders to be the constructional underpinnings of the new western palace wings, installed after that reign.

There is, however, no archeological proof for this assumption. The idea that the whole palace area was raised by Nebuchadnezzar to the same level goes back to Koldewey's (1931: pp. 75–77) attempt to explain the purpose and, above all, the condition of the mudbrick wall delimiting the Haupthof to the west. According to him, the fact that this wall was built from mudbricks could only mean that it represented a temporary stage of construction. However, connecting the Westhof and Haupthof via the vaulted corridors would have been too big an effort for a mere passing phase of construction. This temporality can be excluded all the more safely because of the remains of mudbrick walls, found in the northwest corner of the Haupthof, considered by Koldewey a sanctuary of the Achaemenid period. In fact, the latter lay immediately above the paving of Nebuchadnezzar, slightly overlapping the northern ramp. From this, it may be concluded that the ramp system continued to be used at least until Achaemenid times.

The picture thus emerging is rather one that shows the brick pavings of the four western courts lying at different levels up until the Achaemenid period. These heights coincide with the downward sloping gradient of Nebuchadnezzar's uppermost paving, made of stamped, 50 cm square terracotta tiles running between the Südburg – from which it was accessible through several gateways – and the inner city wall.² In this respect, the brick rubble containing the Neriglissar cylinders can hardly be considered the underpinnings of the Anbauhof, which was, according to Gasche, rebuilt at a higher level in post-Neriglissar times. Therefore, it seems rather that the brick rubble was not put in place till the construction of the Perserbau, when it served as the underpinnings for the continuation of its red-colored floor, in order for it to link up with the brick pavings in the eastern Südburg complexes. There, the double protome column capital of Achaemenid type signals, at least, the maintained use of this occupation layer until that time.³ It is only due to this episode of construction, that the split-level building design of Nebuchadnezzar's Südburg was abandoned, obliterating the Anbauhof and Westhof complexes.

This hypothesis explains, with equal success, the distribution of the Neriglissar cylinders across several rooms of these complexes and, more effectively than Gasche's proposal, their location within a selection of layers across the compound's multiple strata of brick rubble (cf. Koldewey 1931 : p. 106).

Nevertheless, the basic idea proposed by Gasche remains attractive, in particular relating to the foundation walls of the gateway leading to the Persischen Kiosk, insofar as he suggested that they were built of brick rubble (Koldewey 1931: Pl. 20 and 32). This building technique is well attested in the Achaemenid period. It is then, in this sense, certainly conceivable that the building material was obtained by dismantling the Chaldean palace walls, as suggested by Gasche, thus relocating Neriglissar's cylinders. However, this does not necessarily coincide in time with the construction of the Perserbau.

But, all in all, the evidence from the Anbauhof is intricately complex because of its fragmentary nature, and is self-contradictory on a case-by-case basis. Architectural details are sometimes selectively described, and not always entirely conferrable to the situation shown in the plans and vice versa, or because details visible in the plans, such as the previously mentioned brick rubble foundations, are not always described in the report. As a result, the true extent of this typologically characteristic feature within the Anbauhof complex is unclear, particularly as regards to the RS. The question, whether this layout represents, in Babylon, an Achaemenid conception, or an Achaemenid-period emulation of a long-standing residential concept, cannot be conclusively deduced.

Irrespective of the quest for Achaemenid imperial architecture, the written sources and artifacts found on the Kasr clearly attest to the maintenance of the

Neo-Babylonian palaces, and, in particular, to that of the Hauptburg by the Achaemenid kings and their satraps. The Kasr archive of Belshunu vividly illustrates the central role which the building's infrastructure had on the Kasr, and which it must have played in the economy and administration of "Babylon and Across-the-River"; this is well reflected, for instance, in the so-called Babylon silver hoard (Reade 1986). The fragments of the Babylon version of the Behistun relief-inscription of Darius I can likewise be placed in this historical context (Seidl 1999).

Such an idea of continuity, based on written attestations as well as on inferences from the archeological findings, basically applies to any structure used in Neo-Babylonian times (see now Baker 2012). Their putative disruption in Achaemenid times was, for the most part, simply postulated on the basis of the uncritical quotation of classical accounts, or, as in the specific case of Babylon, considered in passing only while concentrating on other questions.

The city walls of Babylon are a telling example of this attitude. Since the beginning of field research, this structure has been perceived as one of the most outstanding and fascinating monuments of "Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon," whose image was so vividly implanted on European mind both by Biblical metaphors, and by Herodotus' detailed description. The persistence of its character as a fortification into Parthian times was, no doubt, already recognized by the German excavators, but extraneous to the pursued exposure of that preconceived image of Babylon. Indeed, the extensive maintenance efforts under later kings are thoroughly discernible in the archeological documentation. The problem, in retrospect, is that it is hardly possible, on the basis of the existing documentation, to date them more precisely within their Late Babylonian horizon.⁴

The main reason for scholarly concern about the defensive integrity of the city walls in Achaemenid times is, however, the abrupt interruption of the mudbrick walls northeast of the Ninmah temple. Because this feature is located next to a cut-off meander of the Euphrates, scholars have assumed that the disruption was caused by the shift of the Euphrates' riverbed east of the Kasr. The date of this event in the early Achaemenid period was chiefly substantiated through reference to Herodotus' and Ctesias' descriptions of Babylon (Wetzel 1930: p. 77). Though Wetzel (1930: p. 21) certainly described the presence of mud and alluvial sediments at the bottommost levels, he failed to prove that they actually overlaid the city walls. There is nothing to disprove that this meander developed far earlier (contra Bergamini 2011: pp. 26–28, Pl. 5).⁵

The critical reappraisal of the German excavations' evidence corroborates this interpretation, for it proves that the interruption of the wall was already extant before the time of Nabonidus (Heinsch and Kuntner 2011: pp. 512–520). This segment of the city wall might, therefore, never have been

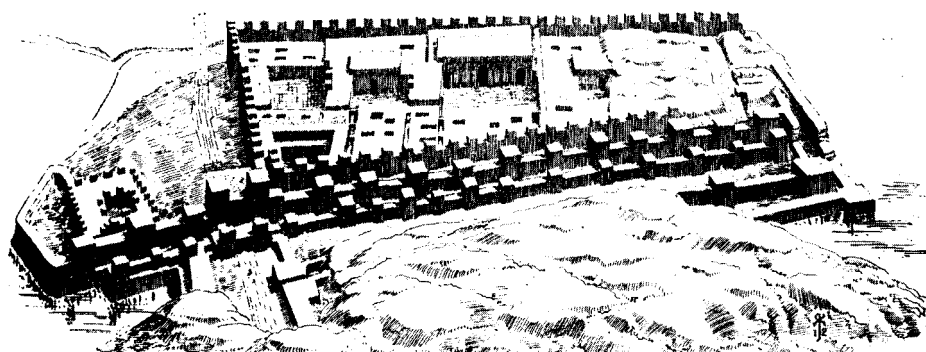


Figure 17.2 Reconstructed view of the building complexes in the quarter of Ay-ibūr-šabû (Koldewey 1913: Fig. 43).

completed, or even planned by Nebuchadnezzar to connect to the eastern line of fortification. One reason for the abandonment of this segment's construction might have been the building of the Osthaken, which continues the eastern line of the inner city walls up to the Sommerpalast in Babylon, making its completion superfluous (cf. Lippolis et al. 2011: p. 6). But it is also conceivable that this segment was restricted *ab initio*, in order solely to reinforce the quarter of Ay-ibūr-šabû when it was elevated by Nebuchadnezzar (cf. Pedersén 2011: pp. 14–18); a possibility already considered by Koldewey (Figure 17.2).

The ancient classical accounts on the relationship of the Achaemenid kings to the Babylonian temples had an even more profound impact on the historicization of these archeological records than the above. The reassessment presented by Kuntner and Heinsch basically criticizes the previous, biased interpretation, firstly, of the consistency of Neo-Babylonian religious architecture as an indication of its ephemerality and, secondly, of the absence of building inscriptions after Cyrus the Great as a willful refusal by the Achaemenid kings to act as temple provider. The absence of building inscriptions has also been interpreted as proof for the dissolution of the Babylonian temple institution within the early Achaemenid period.

The temples at Babylon and Borsippa give evidence of a continuous and strict compliance to Neo-Babylonian architectural and cult traditions into the Seleucid period. During the Achaemenid period, no significant breaks, let alone violent episodes of destruction, are visible, even though these cities represented the main strongholds in the revolts against Xerxes in 484 BCE. Wherever breaks were identified in the brickwork, they signaled the complete rebuilding of the temple maintaining the existing layout with considerable accuracy.

It can, therefore, be deduced that the lack of royal building inscriptions might indicate a shift in the manifestation of Babylonian kingship ideology

during the Achaemenid period. This privilege of providing for the temples might have been conferred to high-ranking personnel of the temple administration, as happened, for instance, in the cases of Anu-uballit Nikarchos and Anu-uballit Kaphalon in Seleucid times. Needless to say, such a situation clearly hampers any attempt to identify the individuals who sponsored the rebuilding of the temples, and their maintenance. However, the archeological situation has only recently become subject to a more permissive, yet nevertheless cautious, interpretation of the archeological records, in reassessing the stratigraphy of construction in regard to the Achaemenid period (Kuntner and Heinsch 2013). Even now, however, this reassessment suggests anything but a standstill in Babylonian religious architecture. On the contrary, there are indications suggesting the *Hürdenhausanlagen* (Heinrichs 1982: pp. 283–335) to be an innovation of the Achaemenid period, or to have at least become the standard layout concept from that time onward, complying with, if not quintessentially fulfilling, the ideals determined by the “archetypal cult-center” of Esagila at Babylon (cf. George 1999).

In this specific context, the ziggurat Etemenanki of Babylon requires special mention. The poor state of preservation of Etemenanki, and its alleged close connection to the rubble mounds at Homera, have, from the very beginning, animated scholars to take “Koldewey’s paradox” as the striking proof for the accuracy of classical narratives; namely, the destruction of the ziggurat by Xerxes and the successive leveling of the ruin by Alexander the Great for his planned but never accomplished rebuilding. Those archeological arguments put forward to advocate this view were based on the preconception that the remains excavated in the plain called Sahn are vestiges of a once entire and intact ziggurat (George 2010).

The archeological situation contradicts, however, the historical view in several instances. Firstly, the evidence of the leveled mudbrick core speaks against the distinction of three superimposed ziggurats dated, respectively, to Esarhaddon, Nabopolassar, and Nebuchadnezzar. These remains give proof of just one mudbrick core. Secondly, the foundation level of the first stage encasing the mudbrick core lies some seven meters lower than Nebuchadnezzar’s precinct wall (Bergamini 2011: p. 23, fn. 6). This point does not, by itself, provide the basis for a valid argument against a date in the first half of the first millennium; but it does raise the possibility of much earlier dates, for which there exist written attestations of building activities. Thirdly, the argument that the ziggurat might have sunk is contradicted by the evidence from Borsippa, where the layers abutting the bottommost brick layers of the mantle were still lying horizontally, or were even curved upwards slightly. On the other hand, visible subsidence, of up to 2 m, affected the mudbrick core of the ziggurat at Borsippa (Allinger-Csollich 1991: p. 439, Fig. 26, p. 457, Fig. 34, p. 478). The absence of comparable subsidence affecting the mudbrick core

at Babylon suggests that the remains uncovered in Sahn never towered much higher than they do today, or at least than they did before they were leveled in Sasanian/Islamic times. As a result, the remains of Etemenanki can best be identified with Nabopolassar's ziggurat. As stated by his son, this construction could only be continued to a height of 30 cubits, but remained, ultimately, unfinished (Kuntner and Heinsch 2013).

Finally, continuity is also reflected by the domestic architecture (Baker 2010). Research continues which is attempting to link changes in the design of dwellings to specific historical events. Predictably, such approaches remain controversial (Heinsch et al. 2011).

Of far greater interest to the issue of simultaneity, and to considerations of the durability of layouts in Babylonian architecture as a mirror of "social dimensions," are the results of the excavations at Tell Abu Qubur and Tell Mahmudiyah (Gasche 1995: pp. 207–209). The house partly unearthed at Mahmudiyah maintained a principally traditional Babylonian layout, despite being newly founded between the late fifth and late fourth centuries BCE. This evidence of continuity stands in clear contrast to the examples from Babylon, Nippur, and Ur, where the Achaemenid period architecture evolved from a Neo-Babylonian precursor. The Abu Qubur building, on the other hand, is characterized by two "salles à quatre pilasters," situated north and south of the central court, and dating to the same time period as Mahmudiyah. Noteworthy in this context is Gasche's suggestion that the antithetic arrangement of the halls at Abu Qubur might represent a stage of development in said evolution. Basically, this suggestion picks up the introductory remarks on the date and originality of the RS in Babylon. Although the question of originality cannot be conclusively settled, it nevertheless seems to echo the situation observed in the field of religious architecture, where long-standing building concepts were adapted in Achaemenid times, and developed their own distinctive architectural features.

Viewed in this light, the archeological evidence for Achaemenid rule over Babylonia is not meager, but hardly unentwineable from the Late Babylonian horizon, since neither the beginning nor the end of the Achaemenid period can be delineated by a stratigraphic horizon. On the other hand, this situation raises the question of whether such a distinction would be at all useful for a better understanding of the development of material culture. The latter has, in fact, so far been described as a gradual change over time, from a more Babylonian to a more Hellenistic fashion, and as marked rather by the accentuation of characteristics than by sudden breaks. Such a situation, it is clear, should not be regarded solely as the outcome of an inadequately understood Late Babylonian stratification.

In contrast to the situation in Babylonia, this problem was originally addressed in the archeology of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, with the result that

an Iron Age terminology was adopted parallel to the historical terminology, to emphasize the autonomy of pottery production from political breaks, including from the aftermath of the fall of Assyria in 614/612 BCE. Nevertheless, Iron Age terminologies still continue to be classified along political lines (Hausleiter forthcoming). This becomes particularly clear in the distinction between a “Neo-Babylonian” and an “Achaemenid” post-Assyrian period (cf. Curtis 2005).

However, since Curtis’ seminal works, new results have been published, calling for an inquisitive reassessment of the view held therein, which pronounces the destruction of the Assyrian capital cities to have been both profound, and the following re-occupation of an “impoverished nature” (cf. Kreppner *forthc.*).

As regards the first aspect, it is remarkable that the renewed Italian investigations at Fort Shalmaneser determined a much less violent destruction, than was described by the English expedition, of the building and its adjacent fortification to have taken place. On the contrary, both clearly show constant efforts of restoration and maintenance, so that the excavators even wonder whether these facilities did not remain functional within the Neo-Babylonian administration of Assyria (Fiorina et al. 2005: p. 95).

The palaces doubtless never reached their former splendor again; however, this should not be seen as an indubitable sign of an impoverished populace as well. It is equally conceivable that the imperial, and mostly military, administrative facilities had become redundant in light of the new political situation of Achaemenid times, so that their repair and maintenance was no longer necessary. On this question, however, a better knowledge of the sequences of settlement of the capital city’s areas, as well as of the chronological order of the post-canonical eponyms, would be desirable. This is because, firstly, the correlation of some horizons of destruction with the Median-Chaldean assaults in 614 and 612 BCE proved, most recently, to be, at the very least, questionable (Miglus forthcoming; Taylor et al. 2010), and, secondly, because the assignment of most of the post-Assyrian traces to the Neo-Babylonian period is chiefly based on the preconception that the “uniformity of pottery” could not have spanned a period of time longer than a generation. It has become clear that such a notion of restricted continuity can and should no longer be advocated (van Ess et al. 2012).

In this context, the evidence of phase H of the Achaemenid occupation of the Burnt Palace and Ezida Temple complex in Nimrud is most conspicuous (Curtis 2005: pp. 180–181), but, at the same time, also controversial. Provided that the current stratigraphic correlation is correct, it would, in fact, entail the re-dating of the mudbrick temple façade “decorated with the ‘niche and reed’ type” from the Neo-Assyrian to the Achaemenid period (Oates and Reid 1956: p. 37, Pl. V, 2 and Pl. VIII): it is true that in the section of the street between the Burnt Palace and the Nabu Temple, the foundation trench of the

dressed limestone substructure is drawn as having been deepened from the surface of level 7. However, in this stratigraphic context, the building process has interpretative priority over the interface determination, which means that the pith-filling (level 6) of the foundation trench should be correlated correctly with the overlaying level 5, and with the corresponding drain. In spite of this, both are attributed by the excavators to phase H. In this context, it is also remarkable that the Achaemenid period phase H has also been ascertained in the shrine of Nabu, in the form of a trodden mud level, thus proving that the building was still in use. It goes without saying that such a far-reaching re-dating needs many more arguments than a reappraisal of the interpretative periodization of a small profile. But, on the other hand, it exemplifies how strongly archeological interpretation is biased by historical contextualization in terms of what is plausible.

It is to be hoped that the ongoing archeological investigations in the East Tigris region (Ur 2012), and in particular at Erbil, will provide new data for an improved understanding of Achaemenid Assyria, which might extend beyond the issue of the persistence of Assyrianizing pottery production (van Ess et al. 2012). In this context, it is important to note the increasing use of GIS (geographical information system) applications and remote sensing data processing, which aims for improvement of archeological research at key sites and landscapes within Babylonia and Assyria, in the hope of an early resumption of large-scale systematic excavations.

NOTES

- 1 As defined by the patterns manifested in the capital cities of the Achaemenid Empire in Susiana and Persis.
- 2 See in regard to the problem of the long runtime of this pavement Heinsch and Kuntner (2011: 521–522).
- 3 For further references about Achaemenid column capitals and bases in Babylonia see Haerinck (1997: 30).
- 4 The term is used in accordance with Assyriological practices and spans the period of time from the Late Assyrian to Seleucid-Parthian periods.
- 5 Bergamini's reasoning concentrates entirely on the fluvial sediments found to overlay the river walls south of the Sergami alongside the Euphrates riverbed where floods can naturally be expected to have happened periodically. This fact does not prove, however, that the Euphrates flowed at this point back from the city area in its original riverbed west of Kasr. The quoted work about recent excavations by Iraqi archaeologists does not confirm Bergamini's reconstruction since it reports that the sand-and-earth layers were found below the mudbrick walls.

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CHAPTER 18

Syria

Astrid Nunn

Introduction

When the Levant became Achaemenid in the year 539 BCE, it had already been part of a large political entity, the Late Babylonian Empire with her capital in distant Babylon. Following the reorganization under Darius I, an area coinciding approximately with the present-day states of Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Palestine, Cyprus, and Jordan became the Fifth Satrapy “abar Nahar” (in Aramaic). This satrapy with the exception of Cyprus will be the subject of this chapter. The Lebanese and north Israeli coast comprises the core region of ancient Phoenicia.

The archeological remains consist of architecture, ceramic, clay figurines, seals, sculpture, metal implements, and coins. The majority of this material and the most spectacular one was excavated on the coastal strip. The inland was less populated and is therefore today poorer in archeological remains.

City Layout and Architecture

The Cities and the Ports

In spite of the Achaemenid policy of centralization, some of the Phoenician cities retained a local dynasty and Samaria and Judea were partially ruled by local governors. The Phoenician cities flourished because of their key position

between East and West. But unfortunately, due to either the large-scale building activities during the Hellenistic period or the fact that most coastal cities (Sidon, Tyre, Gaza) are still inhabited, it is difficult today to find large Achaemenid areas and therefore to reconstruct a city plan of this time in the Levant. Nonetheless, it seems that, as in Iron Age Palestine, well-planned cities with intersecting streets were the rule. Portions of them can be reconstructed in al-Mina, Beirut, Acco, Tel Abu Hawam, Shiqmona, Tel Megadim, Dor, Tel Michal/Makhmish, Ashdod, and Ashkelon.

Some cities, such as Arwad, Sidon, Tyre, Acco, Tel Abu Hawam, Tel Megadim, Dor, Heshbon, or Lakhish, were protected by a fortification wall of the offset-inset or the casemate type. Most of them date to the pre-Achaemenid era. Large forts or citadels, such as in Rishon Lezion, Tell el-Hesi, Tell Jemmeh, or Tell el-Kheleifeh had a strategic and administrative function.

The prototype of an east Mediterranean harbor consists of one or two natural bays, defensible from rocks or islands located nearby. The natural location of Sidon is marked by four bays. According to the prevailing wind, the harbors could be approached from the north or the south. Minet al-Beyda, Tell Sukas, Byblos, Sidon, Acco, Atlit, Dor, or Jaffa and the islands of Arwad and Tyre were of international importance. They had some undersea quays and moles, which were made out of large stone blocks placed on top of one another without mortar. The mortar technique was invented in the Roman period and serves as a chronological indicator, as these walls are very difficult to date. Shipwrecks of the Achaemenid time have been discovered in Shave Zion, Atlit, or Ma'agan Mikha'el (Nunn 2000a,b, 2001; Stern 2001).

The Architecture

The foundations were made out of rubble, the walls either of stones (Tell Mardikh, Tell Sukas, Amrit, Byblos, Sarafand, Makhmish, Lakhish) or of unbaked clay bricks (Tell Mardikh, al-Mina, Ras-Shamra, Tell Sukas, Tel Megadim, Tel Michal, Ashdod, Ashkelon). Typical of Phoenician architecture is ashlar masonry or bricks laid in headers and stretchers alternating with a fill of rubble. Rusticated stones can be seen in the temples of Byblos and Bustan esh-Sheikh, dovetail joints in Amrit.

Whereas most of the sanctuaries of the Achaemenid period in the Levant are unspectacular, two are exceptional: Amrit, located 10 km south of Tartus and Bustan esh-Sheikh, a few km north of Sidon.

The core building, the so-called "Maabed" in Amrit, is a peristyle of 48–56 m per side (Figure 18.1). It encloses a water basin, in whose center a small niche in Egyptian style rose above the water level. The central cultic place of the sanctuary of Bustan esh-Sheikh was a podium of 60×40.60 m and at least 10 m in height. It was probably built around 600 BCE and extended a century

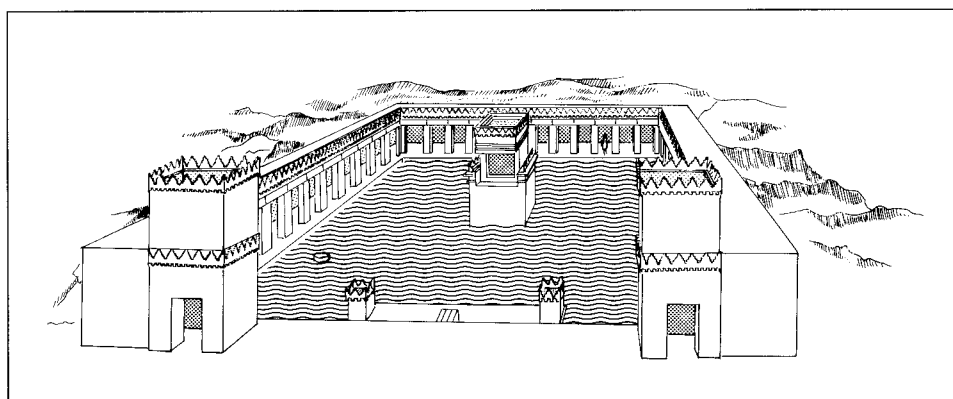


Figure 18.1 Reconstructed view of the Temple of Amrit (Nunn 2000a, p. 203).

later. Scattered architectural elements may indicate the presence of sanctuaries on it. The first sanctuary was built on the first or on the extended podium in a local Assyrian-Late Hittite style. This local temple was replaced about 390–360 BCE by an Attic temple with Ionic-Karian-Lycian elements. Achaemenid elements, such as taurine capitals, may have belonged to a third contemporary temple (Stucky 2005).

A lot of other installations, such as pools and reliefs, were also part of this sanctuary, which was dedicated to the healing god Eshmun (see below, sculpture, temple boys). A second podium was located in Byblos. The temple on it was a pillar hall of 50×21 m. All the other temples were much smaller and of a very simple plan. A broad shrine can be found in Tell Sukas (level F), Mizpe Yammim and Lakhish (“Solar Shrine”), a long temple in Byblos (“Temple of Yehawmilk”), Tell Sukas (level G1) and probably Mount Gerizim.

The mention of a *paradeisos* in Sidon in Diod. 16.41.5 and several fragments of taurine capital protomes make it probable that the most famous Achaemenid palace in the Levant was the one in Sidon. Currently, everything, from its location to its plan, remains unknown. Small, sometimes fortified palaces were built according to the so-called “open court plan,” which was adopted from Assyria (Tell Mardikh, Acco, Hazor, Tell es-Saidiya, Tell el-Mazar, Tel Michal/Makhmish, Tell Jemmeh). The “bâtiment I” in Byblos recalls the Late Hittite architecture. The “Residency” in Lakhish combines the Assyrian-Achaemenid broad room and court with the Syrian entrance with steps and columns.

Most of the dwelling houses had a very simple plan. More sophisticated was a courtyard surrounded by rooms on three or four sides (al-Mina, Ras-Shamra, Tel Nahariya, Shiqmona, Megiddo, Ashkelon). Those houses could also be storerooms. The plan of the houses in Dor is inspired from the Palestinian “Four-room” type.

Almost nothing is known about the external and interior furnishing and decoration of the buildings. A few stepped blocks probably adorned the roofs of the temples in Byblos and Amrit (Figure 18.1). Benches (Tel Michal) or platforms (“altar” in Tell Sukas and Lakhish, “bamah” in Mizpe Yammim) were placed along the walls. Amongst the widespread devotional objects are the small cubic incense burners, which sometimes bear pictures of men and animals. They probably came to Palestine under Assyrian influence. One of the bronze buckets found in the sanctuary of Mizpe Yammim bears a drawing of Isis and an inscription, according to which the donor made this offering to Astarte.

Large secular buildings in the Achaemenid core land were decorated with glazed bricks and stone reliefs. This was not the case in the western province, although three Phoenician stone reliefs from Arwad and Byblos may have adorned a secular building. They represent a sphinx, griffins, and a lion.

A typology of the architecture of the Achaemenid period in the Levant is difficult to develop. The sanctuaries of Amrit and Bustan esh-Sheikh are unique. The other buildings either refer to different Near Eastern types or are typeless because of their simplicity.

The Cemeteries

The largest cemeteries excavated thus far are in Deve Hüyük, Nayrab, al-Mina, Tell Sukas, Kamid el-Loz, Sarafand, Ahziv, Atlit, Dor, Tell es-Saidiya, Tell el-Mazar, Tel Michal/Makhmish, Gezer, Lakhish, Tell el-Hesi, and Tell el-Farah South. Their for the most part simple earth burials were sometimes faced or covered with stones or stone slabs. More elaborated are rock-cut or cist graves built out of stone walls and covered by stone (Ras-Shamra, Amrit, Gezer and Lakhish, Tell el-Farah South). They could contain a simple stone (Nayrab, al-Mina, Ras-Shamra) or clay coffin (Til Barsip, Shekhem, Tell el-Mazar, Tell Jemmeh). Rock-cut shaft tombs with one or more chambers (Ras-Shamra, Amrit, Sidon, Tyre, Akhziv, Atlit, Dor, Ashkelon, Gaza), in which anthropoid sarcophagi could be deposited (see below), are scattered along the coast. Monuments are rare. In Amrit, the two so-called “maghazil” A and B (spindle in Arabic) are towers on a base adorned with lions and situated above hypogea.

The deceased were lying, without particular distribution between men, women, and children, either on their back, or outstretched on their sides or in a crouched position. Their heads were often oriented to the east. Most of the burial offerings were ceramic vessels. Bronze objects, such as bowls, dippers, strainers, jugs, sticks, pins, tweezers, or mirrors and weapons were signs of wealth (Deve Hüyük, Tell Ahmar, Atlit, Shekhem, Gezer, Tell el-Farah South). The bronze joints of a couch and a stool in Tell el-Farah South are exceptional.

All the deceased were adorned with jewelry, women with necklaces, earrings and pins; men and women with bangles for arms or legs, finger rings and fibula. A rich burial would contain seals, coins (numerous in Kamid el-Loz), bronze implements, and weapons. Of particular interest are the 970 dog burials in Ashkelon.

The Archeological Material

The archeological material is presented in order of quantity. The Achaemenid local ceramic is generally not spectacular and, because most shapes have their root in the Iron-II-Age, the identification of a sherd as Achaemenid is often problematic (Lehmann 1996; Stern 2001). Thin or thick and sometimes carinated bowls, craters, cooking pots, mortaria, jars, hole-mouth jars, jars with basket handles, amphorae, bottles, and lamps allow us to trace settlement during this period in the Levant. This pottery is poorly decorated. The only characteristic feature is the wedge-shaped and reed impressed decoration. Some vases have the shape of Bes.

A much more precise indicator is the imported Greek ceramic, which was found in all larger sites, but on the coastal sites more than inland, as pottery had to be transported from the harbors to the inland sites. Although east Greek and Corinthian pottery was still being imported, from the sixth century BCE on, Greek pottery is mainly Attic (Nunn 2014).

The bulk of Attic pottery consists of plain black glaze ceramic. The oldest Attic sherds in Israel/Palestine go back to 540–530 BCE and belong to the black glaze ceramic and the black figure ceramic types. The export of red figure ceramic began as early as c. 520 BCE, immediately after its invention. The repertoire of shapes is mainly limited to drinking vessels (skyphoi, cups, or cup-skyphoi, bowls, and bolsals), storage vessels (bell crater, calyx crater, and column crater) and vessels for transport of wine, oil, or perfume (lekythoi, amphoriskoi, juglets). Plates and lamps were also relatively numerous. A few Panathenaic prize amphorae have been found. Many other shapes common among Attic ceramics do not occur at all.

The largest number of examples of black figure ceramic comes from the Haimon Painter workshop and his followers, and from the Beldam Painter, who are all of moderate quality. Among the best represented red figure painters is the Pithos Painter. But, along with the average quality, high-quality vessels also found their way to the east. Finally, it should be noted that simple shapes of the black glaze ceramic were locally imitated.

When the Greek ceramic of al-Mina was discovered, L. Woolley, its excavator, and many other scholars were enthusiastic about the “irrefutable” proof of Greek presence on the Levantine coast. However, it turned out that the

relevant store room was not filled with Greek jugs, but with Levantine imitations of Greek jugs. Since then, the focus of mainstream research concerning the presence of Greeks in the Levant has changed. The material and textual evidence for the constant settlement of a significant Greek community is scant. The limited repertoire of shapes and motifs and the fact that the vessels were partly found in store rooms, indicate that the Greek tableware had been deposited to be subsequently distributed and sold. Almost all graffiti found on the Greek ceramic is Phoenician. The Greek influence left a heavy imprint on terracottas, seals, and statues during the Achaemenid time. But this was a phenomenon of fashion which of course presupposes contacts with Greeks, but no large permanent settlement whose design was adapted for certain objects. The cliché, that the Levantine did not like pictures, has been deconstructed. Even if seen from the Attic point of view the quality of the Greek vessels is average, from the local point of view, the Attic ceramic was incomparably more beautiful than the pictureless local variety.

Inner Levantine trade existed. The amphorae used to transport wine or oil in Israel/Palestine were generally not from Attica, but from Phoenicia or eastern Greece.

It is possible to distinguish two main regions for the local terracotta types (Nunn 2000a). They were generally solid, but a few are hollow and molded, sometimes with a stamped face.

The northern region reaches from north Syria to Amrit and includes the inland area. There, the main terracotta types are clay plaques with a woman en face and riders. The women are nude or dressed. They are very often presenting their breasts, or, when dressed, holding their arms alongside their body or carrying a flower on their breasts. Some have a crown or a polos on the head (Figure 18.2). These clay figurines are the subject of a general study (M.G. Micale). Preliminary results hint at the fact that these women with seemingly “Greek” features are more ancient than the nude ones and that they quickly spread under the Achaemenids.

Figures of a male rider were so common that they are plainly called “Persian rider.” But the Syrian types are worthy of special mention as some variations are mostly confined to this region: there are male riders bearing a child, but there are also female riders, some with small added faces, and riding figures sitting under a very dominantly-depicted canopy.

The second large region is situated south of the one aforementioned. Whereas Syria was not very permeable to foreign influences, the Phoenician clay figurines, which are two- and three-dimensional, show an amazing thematic and stylistic diversity. One can observe the fine graduation between local Near Eastern, Egyptian, and Greek elements engrafted on local types. Nude women presenting their breasts, dressed pregnant or breastfeeding women, seated and standing men with different caps, horsemen, or masks



Figure 18.2 Private collection: Terracotta of a woman, H. 15, 1 cm (Nunn 2000a, pl. 11, 15).

were found all over this region, apart from Samaria and Judea. More Greek coined clay figurines show nude youths, men with caps or helmets, and dressed women. It seems that clay figurines were mainly locally produced, very few could have been imported from eastern Greece.

The clay figurines were mainly found in sanctuaries (Lakhish) and their refuse pits called *favissa* or *bothros* (Amrit, Kharaib, Dor, Makhmish/Tel Michal, Tell es-Safi, Tel Zippor, Tel Erani) and rarely in tombs (Akhziv, Atlit).

A few figures are clearly representations of gods, but it is still impossible to identify the majority of them. Whether they represent gods and goddesses or cultic staff, their primary function was to protect, the living and the deceased alike.

Seals can be found as original or stamped on clay. However, in the case of the Levant a high percentage of the originals come from the market (Nunn 2000a; Stern 2001). Seals have been found all over this region, but more

densely on the coast. The neo-Assyrian and Late Babylonian tendency to use stamp seals continues into the Achaemenid period. Only few cylinder seals remained in use in inland Syria and Jordan. Two thirds of the stamp seals consist of scarabs and scaraboids, the others are mainly domes and conoids. The seals can be divided into groups, which are clearly defined according to their style and motifs: Isis, Nephtys, and Horus, other gods, Bes, Herakles, griffins, sphinx, lions are – although stylistically different – typical of the Phoenician and Egyptian groups. The main local Achaemenid motif is the “master of the animals,” who is represented on scarabs, on the bullae of Wadi Daliyeh, and on the large group of the Levantine glass conoids. Graeco-Persian elements remind us of Greek iconography. Seals of the Phoenician group were mostly found on the coast, those of the Egyptian group mostly inland. The Achaemenid and Levantine groups, which are characterized by a poor and repetitive set of motifs, are widespread. Most of the seals are locally made, but some were imported from eastern Greece. The jaspis seals of the Phoenician group find their equivalent in the so-called Tharros group from Sardinia. How exactly the exchange occurred between both shores of the Mediterranean Sea is not clear.

In contrast to the figurative seals, which were for private use, the administration of Juda, Samaria, and Ammon used, as in the Iron Age, seals which only bear an inscription.

Even though around half of the anthropoid sarcophagi were discovered in the necropolises around Sidon, they were fashionable and affordable to the elite of the entire coast between Arwad and Gaza (Frede 2000; Lembke 2001). The Sidonian kings Tabnit and Eshmunazar II fetched two anthropoid sarcophagi from Egypt about 525 BCE. Sidonian production started later – around 480 BCE. These oldest sarcophagi show Egyptian elements, but are stylistically already Greek influenced. However, five clay anthropoid sarcophagi were found in 1996 in a necropole near Amrit. If their dating between 510 and 450 BCE turns out to be correct, the very first imitated sarcophagi may have been made in a Cypriot-influenced style. The four famous elaborated sarcophagi from the Sidonian necropolis, now exhibited in the Archaeological Museum of Istanbul, were made between 425 and 330–310 BCE.

Most of the sculptures were excavated in Amrit and Sidon. The Cypriot statues were mainly imported to Phoenicia between 620 and 320 BCE, a few statues being local imitations. Though they were found along or near the coast from al-Mina to Tell Jemmeh, around 550 out of 650 pieces were found in Amrit. Others came to light with clay figurines in temple favissae (Tell es-Safi, Tel Zippor and Tel Erani). They were offerings, devoted to local deities and placed in sanctuaries. They represent gods and donors, the “master of the animals,” standing men, who are generally dressed, sometimes with offerings and rarely standing women and temple boys (Lembke 2004). A few Cypriot temple boys also found their way to the sanctuary of Bustan-esh-Sheikh. The

Sidonian court sculptors refashioned them after the Greek manner from 430 BCE, creating a new Greek style and new types featuring standing and sitting toddlers and children. The Hellenized production of temple boys and sarcophagi reached its peak between 420 and 380 BCE. The U-formed “tribune d’Echmoun,” which is decorated with gods and nymphs and a hunting relief, testifies to the extreme hellenization of the Sidonian court around 350 BCE.

A few other small statues, whether in metal, stone, clay, or faience, in Egyptian, Greek or local style, have survived.

Of outstanding importance is the stela of Yehawmilk, King of Byblos around 450–425 BCE. The king is represented in Achaemenid court dress in front of his goddess, who resembles Isis but is, according to the inscription, Baalat.

Luxury items made of metal, such as vessels, candelabra, furniture, or jewelry, and weapons, alabaster, and glass have mostly been found in graves. Because of an international Achaemenid style, it is often difficult to be precise as to their origin. The two bronze thymiateria from the graves in Shekhem and Umm Udhaina, respectively adorned with floral elements and a female figurine, give us an idea of temple furnishing. A bronze lion paw found near Samaria points to a royal seat.

The largest number of circulating coins was local, the foreign ones being from Persia, Greece, or Cyprus, (see Chapter 57 Royal Coinage). The main Phoenician cities Byblos, Tyre, Sidon, and Arwad coined money from 470 BCE onward. Each city developed its own iconography. It was Egyptianizing and Phoenician in Byblos, Achaemenid (archer) and Greek (hippocampus and dolphin) in Tyre. The ship and the murex shell commemorate the economic power of Sidon. Attic motifs were imitated in Samaria, where coinage started about a century later. Judean coins bear the name of the province written in Hebrew letters and are therefore called Yehud coins.

Conclusion

The main characteristics of the Achaemenid archeological material of the fifth satrapy are multiplicity, diversity, and eclecticism. Local, Near Eastern, Cypriot, Egyptian, Greek, and typical Achaemenid elements were combined. But, obviously, style is only an external shape, which does not touch on the content of the represented figure. This is especially clear amongst the clay figurines and the seals, on which some themes, such as single women with a child, men, or the “Master of the animals,” are repeated in Egyptian, Greek, local-Phoenician, or local Near Eastern style, whereas their meaning remains identical. It is also evident that only figures or themes, which were either pre-existing in the Levantine culture or easy to integrate into Levantine life,

were chosen. The figurative Attic ceramic provides a good example for this. The pictures on the vessels showed Greek gods, in particular Dionysos, heroes, amongst them Herakles, mythological scenes, mixed beings, and men and women. The broad categories of the divine, the heroic, and the human were understood by the local population. Herakles could easily fit into the image of the “Master of the animals.” The same can be said for mixed beings such as satyrs, maenads, sphinxes, and centaurs. Even if the fashion may have started in royal circles, because Hellenized objects were in part expensive, it was largely accepted and supported by the entire population from 550 BCE onward. The numerous affordable local clay figurines and seals also underwent a phase of hellenization.

Another novelty of this period is the choice of the figurative representations which allow us to draw conclusions about religious changes. If in the second millennium it is already very difficult, due to the lack of attributes or special garments, to identify the gods, by the first millennium it is often impossible to ascertain whether the represented person is even divine. Iconography and written sources allow us to follow the evolution from a “classical” polytheistic religion, where each god is responsible for one domain to a religion, where one god embraces all aspects. Each individual is able to choose his god – the main goal is his personal wellbeing and salute. The idea of protection is predominant in all realms: combined with care (pregnant women), with power (“master of the animals”), or healing (temple boys).

These developments were indirectly fostered by the Achaemenid Empire. The Levant became part of a large territory, whose borders were open to the political center in the east, as well as to the west, where the cultural and economic entwinement increased.

The scarcity of Achaemenid remains raised the issue of an “elusive empire.” But the Levant has always been shaped by a mixture of cultural elements, precisely making its own unique cultural profile. This continues in the Achaemenid period. While Persian dresses, jewelry, furniture, or architectural elements mainly entered the royal and elite circles, they did not change basic elements such as language, religion, or the content of pictures.

The Achaemenid Empire was in reality not elusive in the Levant, even if the coast profited more than the inland, which remained more rooted in the Iron Age. The “lack” of Achaemenid material turns more and more out to be a matter of awareness.

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CHAPTER 19

Cyprus

Anna Cannavò

The archeological evidence concerning Cyprus in the Persian period is scanty and scattered. Even if the number of excavations has increased impressively during recent decades, the knowledge of the two-centuries-long permanence of Cyprus within the Achaemenid Empire (c. 525–332 BCE) is still far from being satisfactory. Especially limited is the evidence concerning the relationships between the Achaemenids and the Cypriot kingdoms, and the way they integrated the administrative and tributary organization of the empire; the Cypriot civilization of the Persian period, better known, rarely shows direct and evident connections with the Achaemenid world (Zournatzi 2008, 2011).

Since the beginning of the Archaic period (750 BCE), and more probably even before (Iacovou 2002, 2013a), Cyprus was divided into a number of small kingdoms, struggling against each other for access to primary resources and markets (Figure 19.1). The entrance of the island into the Persian Empire, around or slightly before 525 BCE (Watkin 1987), did not radically change this state of affairs: through their voluntary submission (Herodotus [Hdt.] 3.19.3; Xenophon [Xenoph.] *Cyropaedia* 7.4.1–2 and 8.6.8), the Cypriot kings held the right to strike their own coins (see Chapter 57 Royal Coinage) and to pursue their own political and territorial goals, as long as they did not interfere with Persian interests. The history of the Persian period in Cyprus, as long as we can reconstruct it from the Greek and Cypriot sources, is essentially the history of inter-island conflicts based on internal dynamics (see Chapter 44 Cyprus and the Mediterranean). If sometimes (as in the case of the Cypriot participation in the Ionian Revolt, or the reign of Evagoras of

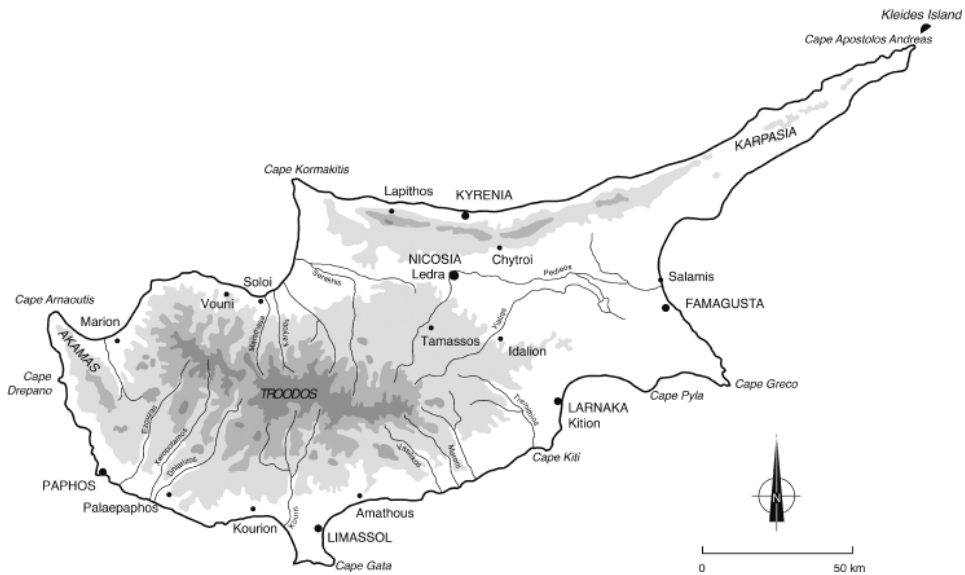


Figure 19.1 Map of ancient Cyprus. © A. Flammin, Y. Montmessin, A. Rabot/UMR 5189, HiSoMA, MOM.

Salamis) they seem to acquire a wider resonance, we are rarely able to appreciate the Persian attitude toward them. One case is exemplary of our difficulties: the bronze tablet with a long Cypro-syllabic inscription found in Idalion in the mid-nineteenth century, and referring to a siege of the city by Medes and Kitians, is still under debate because of the Persian participation in a territorial attack which would otherwise seem a purely Cypriot internal affair (the last assessment by Georgiadou 2010). Gjerstad's interpretation (1948: pp. 479–481) of the Persian/Kitian coalition as a sign of the ethnic polarization arisen in Cyprus after the Ionian revolt (the Kitians, that is Phoenicians, being allied of the Persians against the Cypro-Greek kingdoms of the island) has been correctly dismissed by Maier (1985), but since then no better explanation has been found.

We can distinguish two main levels of interconnections between Persia and Cyprus during the two-centuries-long Persian control of the island. As the first level, the presence of Persian administrative or military officers, both through the installation of permanent control points, at least during some critical phases, and more often through non-permanent and occasional contacts, is particularly difficult to assert because of the ambiguous and poor evidence. A second level, justifying of the Persian or Persianizing taste of some Cypriot products of this period, is that of the circulation of Persian models or objects (especially some of them, such as metalware, jewelry, and seals: Zournatzi 2008) whose ideological value was particularly interesting for the self-definition and legitimization of the Cypriot elites.

Persian Presence in Cyprus: The Architectural Evidence

Some monumental buildings and structures documented in the western part of the island and dating from between the end of the Cypro-Archaic and the Cypro-Classical I period (that is, the fifth century BCE) are usually considered as the most eloquent evidence concerning the actual Persian presence in Cyprus.

The remains of what seems to be a siege mound discovered in the 1950s outside the northwestern gate of the Palaepaphos city wall (on the *Marchello* hill), are usually taken as the archeological confirmation of Herodotus' statement that after the repression of the Cypriot uprising in 498 BCE, all the rebellious Cypriot cities were besieged, the most dramatic siege being that of Soloi (Hdt. 5.115); the archeological material (ceramics, but also the great number of Cypriot sculptures and votive inscriptions apparently sacked from a sanctuary close to the walls and assembled to raise the ramp) indicates a dating of the mound to around 500 BCE (Maier 2008, Leibundgut Wieland and Tatton-Brown 2019; here Figure 19.2). Nevertheless, the Palaepaphos Urban Landscape Project seems to provide elements which contradict the interpretation of these remains as a siege ramp: the outside face of the city wall, against which the ramp leans, should in fact be interpreted as the inner side, and the ramp could better be considered as a votive deposit (Iacovou 2008, 2013b, 2019). As the urban organization of Palaepaphos is largely unknown, there is

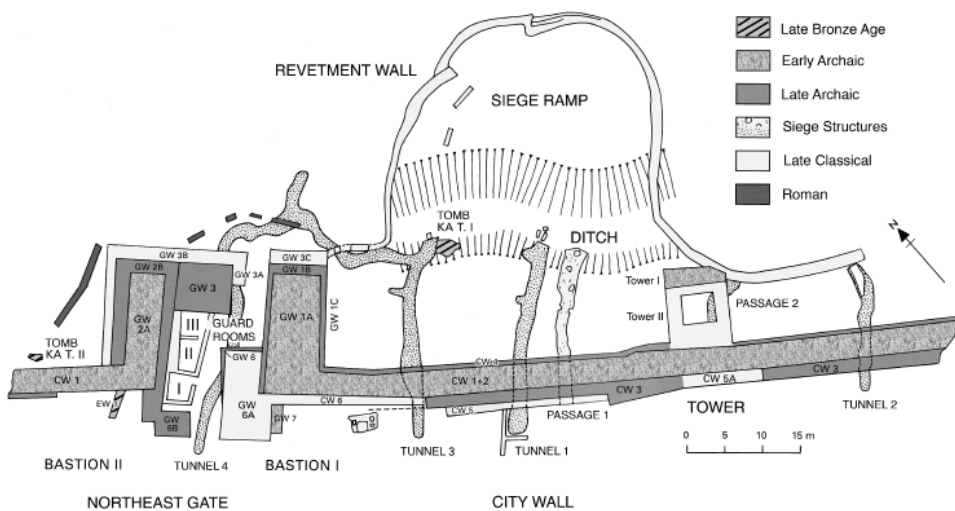


Figure 19.2 The Persian siege ramp at Palaepaphos-*Marchello*. Chronological phases of the fortification. Source: Reproduced from Maier 2008, p. 21 fig. 18, by permission of Swiss-German Archaeological Mission of Kouklia-Palaepaphos; modified by C. Marcks-Jacobs.

still general agreement around the traditional interpretation of the ramp as the relic of the Persian siege of Palaepaphos in 498 BCE, but the Palaepaphos Urban Landscape Project will possibly lead to a complete revision of this as well as other monuments (Iacovou 2019).

As a consequence of the rebellion of almost all the Cypriot kingdoms in the 490s, the Persian presence on the island is supposed to have increased in the years immediately following the repression of the revolt. Two monumental buildings are usually considered to illustrate this presence, both with military and administrative aims: the *Hadjiabdoullah* palace of Palaepaphos, and the Vouni palace close to Soloi.

The remains of a large monumental building, discovered and only partially excavated in the 1950s at *Hadjiabdoullah* (Palaepaphos), have been first interpreted as the residence of the Persian authority (the commander of a garrison?) imposed on the conquered city after the siege of 498 BCE. This interpretation mainly results from the analysis of the architectural and technical characteristics of the palace: ashlar masonry of fine quality; a plan with many small rooms and narrow corridors symmetrically arranged, close to the Achaemenid architecture habits without pointing to specific models (Schäfer 1960). However, since no Persian garrisons are archeologically documented not only in Palaepaphos but in all Cyprus (Petit 1991: pp. 161–169; see however Diodorus [Diod.] 11.44.2 and 12.4.1, which has not to be neglected), it seems more reliable to see in the *Hadjiabdoullah* palace the residence of the local king of Paphos, maybe built even before the revolt (the archeological context dating generically from the Cypro-Archaic II period). After the collapse of the structure before the end of the fifth century BCE, the royal residence was possibly transferred to the site of *Evreti*, where a new, less sumptuous palace (also incompletely excavated) was erected at the same time (Maier 1989a: p. 17). Both sites have been the object of new excavations in the very last years, which will certainly lead to new conclusions in the future (Iacovou 2019).

The Vouni palace (Figure 19.3) is better known. Excavated by the Swedish Expedition in 1928–1929, the well-preserved remains of the ground plan of a large residential building are situated on the top of a hill on the northwestern coast, close to Soloi (4 km to the east) and Marion (40 km to the west). Together with the palace, a sanctuary, fortifications, and necropolis have been found (Gjerstad et al. 1937: pp. 76–290). The large palatial complex has been interpreted by Gjerstad as a control point built by the Persians after the repression of the Cypriot revolt, and occupied by the Persophile dynasty of Marion in order to keep a close watch on the rebellious kingdom of Soloi (Gjerstad et al. 1937: pp. 286–288). Two main phases would be identifiable: the first, running from c. 500 to c. 450/440 BCE, would be characterized by a typical Cypriot (“Eteocypriot”) plan, influenced by Anatolian and

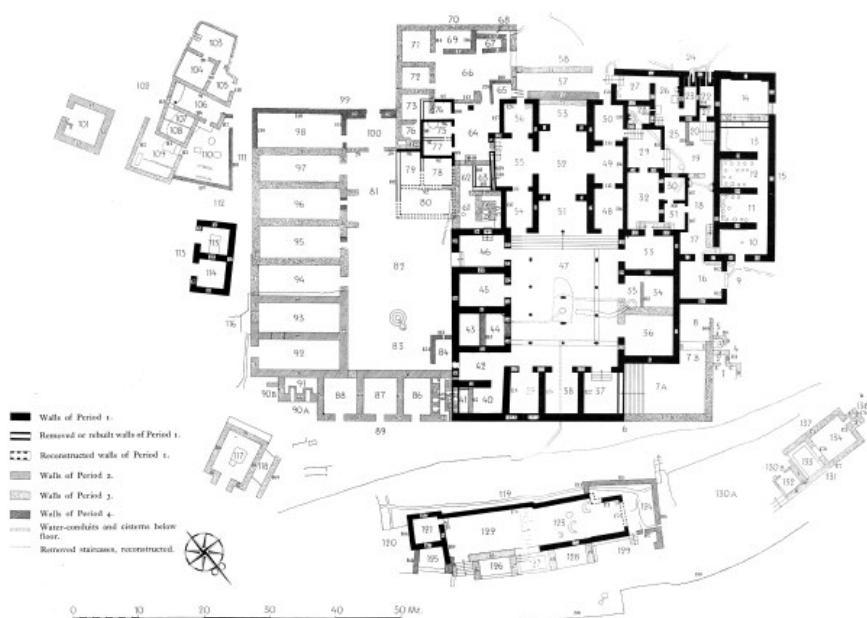


Figure 19.3 Plan of the palace of Vouini, Swedish excavations. Source: Reproduced from Gjerstad et al. 1937, fig. 119, by permission of National Museum of World Culture, Sweden.

Syrian architecture; a second phase, from c. 450/440 to c. 380 BCE, would be marked by the “Hellenization” of the architecture of the palace, combining Cypriot and Greek elements. This interpretation, reflecting, in Gjerstad’s ideas, the political history of the island (the shift to the second phase of the palace corresponding to Kimon’s expedition of 449 BCE, and the rising of an Hellenophile dynasty in Marion), has been radically challenged by Maier (1985: pp. 36–37), and recent studies try to analyze the architecture of the palace underlining its adherence to the eclectic Achaemenid architectural style (Zournatzi forthcoming), and its function as a fortress during the fifth and the beginning of the fourth centuries BCE under the control of the Persians (Hellström 2009) or of Marion (Hermay 2013).

The monetary, gold, and silver treasure found in a coarse jar under a staircase of the palace, and dating from the destruction of the palace, around 380 BCE, adds some interesting elements to the hypothesis of Vouni as a Persian fortress or administrative center. Following a recent proposition (Zournatzi 2017), not only the monetary hoard (composed of 248 minted coins, almost all Cypriot, and four darics) but also the gold and silver objects (bracelets, pendants, bowls, and four pieces of cut gold) would have to be considered as elements of the official fiscal contribution the Cypriot kings had to send annually to the Persian authorities. Particularly relevant to this hypothesis are the three Achaemenid-style silver bowls, which would clearly echo the “tribute bowls” of the Neo-Assyrian times; a stone model of such kind of bowls could be identified in a limestone artifact found in the royal palace of Amathus (Zournatzi 2017: pp. 7–9).

If the Vouni palace is still the only plausible evidence for a permanent official presence linked to the Persian control of the island, other Cypriot palaces of the Classical period can be conveniently cited as elements of comparison for the analysis of the architecture of Vouni, which is most plausibly the original combination of local elements rather than the imitation of foreign models. At Soloi, nothing certain is known: some monumental walls, whose technique and quality suggest a public or royal destination, have been discovered on the northern side of the acropolis, but the interruption of excavations in 1974 has hindered further investigations (Maier 1989a: p. 16). At Polis Chrysochous, the site of ancient Marion, excavations on the *Peristeries* plateau have brought to light the remains of a late Archaic building, possibly a royal palace; some aspects of its plan and construction techniques can be tentatively compared to those of the palace of Vouni (Papalexandrou 2006, 2008). The royal palace of Amathus, excavated since 1975 on the southern hillside of the acropolis has some technical and ornamental elements directly pointing to the Vouni palace (T. Petit in Aupert 1996: pp. 99–107; Hermay 2013). In the inland kingdom of Idalion, conquered around the mid-fifth century BCE by Kition,

the monumental remains of a public building have been identified as the seat of the Phoenician administration of the city in the Classical period (Hadjicosti 1997: pp. 57–60; Hadjicosti 2017; Amadasi Guzzo 2017). For other cities of Cyprus, which certainly had a royal palace – Kition, Kourion, and Salamis – no concrete evidence exists: in what concerns Salamis, it is only possible to cite a double-bull-protome capital of Achaemenid inspiration, discovered out of context in 1890, and possibly Hellenistic (Roux 1980; Petit 1991: pp. 173–174; Zournatzi 2008: p. 241 and note 10, with further references).

Nothing in the archeological material, except the architectural evidence shortly mentioned (whose interpretation is not always obvious), allows presuming a permanent Persian presence in Cyprus: should we believe Diod. 11. 44. 2 and 12. 4. 1, Persian garrisons in the island were short-living, and probably left no real monumental traces. The few Persian objects found on the island – some darics, seals, and metal bowls (Petit 1991: pp. 171 with references; Zournatzi 2008) – can be interpreted as signs of the (limited) circulation of Persian luxury objects in the island, probably through diplomatic or official channels.

Persian Influences on Cypriot Civilization: Emulation and Legitimization

Even without any official, permanent military or administrative center, the Persians certainly had many occasional contacts, for fiscal, military, or diplomatic reasons, with the Cypriot kings. The lack of an actual Achaemenid center within the island did not prevent Achaemenid civilization and material culture from entering and spreading throughout Cyprus, and influencing the cultural tastes of the local aristocracies, eager to emulate foreign elites' habits. This phenomenon, frequently documented in the whole Mediterranean basin throughout antiquity, is attested in Cyprus even before the Persian period, and it is largely independent from the incidental political situation (the Achaemenid domination over the island), but it is the result of a wide and deep circulation of luxury items, values, and ideologies between elites. Hence, connecting Persian influences on Cypriot arts to the Achaemenid control of the island is misleading, and contributes to hide other channels, such as Phoenician or Ionian art, which are, in the case of Cyprus, of the greatest relevance.

Against this background of wide circulation of styles, techniques, and iconographic themes, some Cypriot peculiarities are particularly evident: the limestone and terracotta sculpture, a flourishing art in Cyprus during the late Archaic and Classical periods, allows us to detect their most important

features (Hermay 1989a). Even if more and more influenced by Greek art, particularly since the end of the fifth century BCE, and in spite of the occasional adoption of some Persian elements (Zournatzi 2008: pp. 241–247), Cypriot statues are essentially devoted to worship, and not to funerary practices (as commonly in the southeastern Mediterranean) or to the celebration of heroes and athletes (as in the Greek word). Cypriot statues, characterized by a great attention to the portrait, seem to elaborate Greek technical novelties and to translate them into the local limestone and terracotta products, expression of the devotion to the traditional Cypriot gods (especially in the great sanctuaries of the Golgoi and Idalion region; Hermay and Mertens 2014).

Cypriot elites, the purchasers of the great statues that populated the urban and extra-urban sanctuaries of the island, wished to be represented with royal or noble attributes which were normally taken from the Egyptian and Persian repertoire (Satraki 2013): the Egyptian double-crown with *uraeus* of a limestone head from the Persian siege ramp of Palaepaphos (now in the Liverpool Museum, KA730) is a mark of kingship (Maier 1989b), as is the *mitra*, which A. Hermay has identified on a limestone head of the Louvre museum (AM 2835; Hermay 1989b: p. 223), but which is often represented even on smaller terracotta figurines (Hermay 1989a: pp. 180–181; Cannavò 2010: p. 63 note 71 with references; Satraki 2013: p. 132). The mixed, hybridized character of these figures, putting together Persian, Egyptian, Assyrian, and Greek elements, is particularly evident, and they have been described as an “écho hellénisé de l’image du Grand Roi ou de hauts personnages de l’empire achéménide” (Hermay 1989a: p. 181).

In this perspective, the Cypriot loans to the Achaemenid civilization are several, and not only in sculpture: hoods with lappets, *kandys* (coat with sleeves), *anaxyrides* (long trousers) are represented on small limestone and terracotta figurines together with the typical Persian short sword, the *akinakes* (Zournatzi 2008: pp. 241–242). Representations of torques and earrings of Achaemenid type are known on some numismatic issues of the kingdom of Salamis (Markou 2006; *here* Figure 19.4), representing the king with his royal and sacred attributes: here again, typical Achaemenid elements denoting high status are integrated and reinterpreted to express Cypriot conception of kingship, the legitimacy of the royal status, and the tight link with the divinity (sometimes represented on the right face); in the most ancient issues, this representation of kingship is associated with what is presumed to be a portrait of Evagoras II with a Persian *tiara* (Destrooper-Georgiades 2000: p. 235, pl. 37 no. 7–8; Markou 2006: p. 150 fig. 7; *here* Figure 19.5). The combination of kingship and divinity on Salaminian coins is not fortuitous but represents a central element of the Cypriot numismatic production, the Cypriot kings wishing to express on their coins their legitimate association to their territory



Figure 19.4 Obverse of a gold stater of king Pnytagoras of Salamis. Source: Reproduced by permission of Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation.



Figure 19.5 Silver obol of king Evagoras II of Salamis. Source: Reproduced by permission of Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation.

(through the use of ethnics or symbols) and their privileged relation with the divine element (Hermayr 2006).

Together with the coins and the silver bowls, the Vouni treasure contained four gold specimens of *omega*-shaped bracelets with animals' (goats' and calves') heads finials, which are considered to be a typical Achaemenid product. Found in other regions under Persian control (at Pasargadae, and at Vani, Georgia), similar bracelets are represented (without the animals' heads finials) on the Apadana reliefs as a kind of "court" jewel, apparently produced in different parts of the Achaemenid Empire, with stylistic and regional

variations (Zournatzi 2017: pp. 10–12). It is not impossible that, like the Achaemenid-type silver bowl, the *omega*-shaped bracelets were manufactured specifically for the payment of the annual tribute to the Great King, or as diplomatic gifts: as such, they were supposed to satisfy standard Persian requirements, even within the range of provincial stylistic variations (Zournatzi 2017); the animals' heads' finials, which appear also on the torque of the Salaminian numismatic issues already mentioned (Markou 2007: p. 421), could in particular be supposed to be an element responding to specific Cypriot tastes.

Nevertheless, the lack of any sculptural representation of figures adorned with such jewels – *omega*-shaped bracelets and torques (the torque on the limestone statuette described in Zournatzi 1989 is uncertain) – suggests the greatest caution in what concerns the actual diffusion of such luxury objects in Cyprus. The unique representation of a torque on Salaminian numismatic issues could indeed suggest that this was actually considered, on such an occasion, as a kind of status symbol, denoting the legitimacy of the royal power. The possible identification of the Salaminian king represented on the most ancient issues with Evagoras II acting as a “satrap,” better as a military officer of Artaxerxes in 351, is tempting: with coins representing him on the right side as a satrap, and on the left side as a truly Cypriot king, whose authority is granted by the Achaemenid torque, Evagoras II expressed his will to regain Salamis as its legitimate ruler (Markou 2006: pp. 143–146).

The Persian impact on the political and economic structure of Cyprus was certainly not negligible, but it seems to have been generally indirect and mild. As the Achaemenid authorities were interested in maintaining the local balance of regional powers, which they considered as the best manner in which to assess their super-regional control, they did not interfere, at least not exceptionally, in internal Cypriot affairs, leaving Cypriot civilization to develop along its own patterns. But, largely independent from its political predominance, Achaemenid civilization, especially through luxury and status symbol artifacts, spread throughout the eastern Mediterranean basin, becoming a reference for aristocracies and elites of a wide and diversified area, including Asia Minor, the Levant, and Cyprus. Achaemenid influences entered Cyprus through a variety of paths, some of them direct (occasional presence of Persian agents; diplomatic exchanges; Cypriot participation in Persian military enterprises), others indirect (Ionian sculpture; Syrian and Phoenician art).

The complex, hybridized results of the elaboration of all these elements bear the signs of the quest for a pan-Cypriot identity, having its focal points in a common model of kingship and the relation with the divinity. More detailed, differentiated regional identities, apparent in the archeological evidence during the Archaic period (Fourrier 2007), are difficult to study in relation to the Persian Empire, the data being so limited; but it is already quite evident that the kingdom of Salamis, at least since the reign of Evagoras, played an

important role in the appropriation of some Achaemenid symbolisms for local needs. The western part of the island (Palaepaphos, Soloi, Marion) seems to have been strategically relevant to Achaemenid interests, but the evidence available is ambiguous, and new, detailed studies can radically change our perspective. Even less is known about the relations between Persia and the southern kingdoms of Amathus and Kition, where the great gap in our documentation is still to be filled.

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CHAPTER 20

Egypt

Melanie Wasmuth

An essential issue of the contribution at hand concerns the definition of “archeological.” The bulk of Egyptian artifacts classifiable as “archeological” may be labeled “art historical source,” “textual source,” “architectural source,” etc. with equal justification. The advantage as well as the difficulty provided by sources that may be classified as both archeological and textual characterize Egyptian artifacts and Egyptological research: a large amount of “archeological” findings from Egypt are inscribed, e.g. paintings and reliefs featuring legends or integrating figurative and textual elements, inscribed statuary, founding stones, and small finds (such as figurines, sistra), or even pottery inscribed with pottery marks or contents labels. For this brief survey, the corpus of sources is therefore comprised of anepigraph and inscribed artifacts and monuments with focus on their representational, infrastructural, or functional aspects.

A further general issue regarding Achaemenid Egypt is the current state of research: though the period covering the twenty-seventh (i.e. first Persian dominion) to the thirty-first dynasty (second Persian dominion) as well as the continuation into the Ptolemaic period has been the focus of several studies and excavations in recent years, these time spans continue to be a minor focus of Egyptology and are studied primarily by scholars from other disciplines (e.g. Ancient History, Classics, Graeco-Roman Archeology). Therefore, the actual amount of data is comparatively scarce, and in the case of uninscribed objects, stratigraphic information and independent dating are often missing altogether. Even inscribed objects are not always easily dated when the

reigning king's name is omitted – a practice starting already before the Achaemenid period. However, there is evidence from the first Persian dominion, the intermediate period (twenty-eighth–thirtieth dynasty), and the second Persian dominion. Sources are preserved that were made within the Egyptian cultural tradition, within completely un-Egyptian cultural traditions and mixing elements from two or more cultural traditions. Their geographical scope ranges from the region of the modern Suez Canal, northwestern Sinai, the Nile Delta and Valley to its adjacent desert areas and the oases. There are royal, “elite” and “non-elite” sources; representational and functional sources; “state,” temple, and “private” sources; sources in situ, in progress of excavation, in collections, and lost sources (i.e. having been transferred or destroyed since antiquity). Moreover, the sources reveal sacral, funerary, profane, and representational activities. Still unrivaled collections of data are provided by Posener (1936) and Bresciani (1958).

Most of the known sources date, or are commonly dated, to the first Persian period (twenty-seventh dynasty). This is due to the presence of the royal name of “Darius,” although that may refer to either Darius I, II, or III. Fortunately, some of the most monumental and longest-known sources (e.g. the canal stelae), but also private stelae from the Serapeum in Saqqara, can definitely be attributed to Darius I because of the regnal year mentioned. Many other objects (e.g. handles of sistra, vessels, etc.) derive from insufficiently known stratigraphic contexts and should be given an ambiguous date, though they are likely to originate from the much longer first Persian dominion. Accurate dating of non-royal art and architecture is particularly difficult as independent dating criteria are still to be established (e.g. Josephson 1997: p. 14). Statues composed within the Egyptian cultural tradition tend to be dated to the twenty-sixth dynasty because of their “trueness to original”; statues incorporating foreign elements that cannot easily be assigned to a specific cultural tradition are usually thought to stem from the Ptolemaic period. However, without a major project that reevaluates the complete corpus of private statuary from the twenty-fifth dynasty to the Ptolemaic period within its prosopographic context, an evaluation of private representational art under Persian rule remains impossible. Most dating criteria for the Persian period that focus on style or composition can be shown to be under-determined: e.g. the so-called “Persian gesture” and “Persian garment” are neither specifically Persian nor restricted to the Persian period, but can already be found on twenty-sixth dynasty monuments (e.g. Schulman 1981; Vittmann 2009: p. 97). Persian period pottery and “small finds” like amulets pose similar challenges. Even though there is evidence from recent excavations (cf. the discoveries at Tell el-Herr: e.g. Valbelle 1999, and Abusir: Bareš et al. 2005) suggesting a potential Persian period origin, the majority of comparative material is often generally dated to the Late Period (e.g. Müller-Winkler 1987, who omits the

twenty-seventh to thirty-first dynasties from her chronological table of artifacts; see also Aston 1999a with respect to the dating of tombs).

The old scientific paradigm notwithstanding, building and cultic activities in the king's name, continued in all regions of the Egyptian realm: in the canal region with a focus on Persian cultic activities, in the Nile Valley, the Delta, and northwestern Sinai with a focus on the continuation of Egyptian cultic traditions and fortification, and in the oases with boosting cultivation and settlement (see Wasmuth 2017a including the map on pl. I; see already Gamer-Wallert and Schefter 1993). Apart from actual in-situ finds, this can also be deduced from the Achaemenid period quarry inscriptions found in the Eastern desert (e.g. Bongrani Fanfoni and Israel 1994; Posener 1936: pp. 98–130).

One core area of royal monumental display is along the canal joining the Red Sea and the Wadi Tumilat and thus providing a navigable waterway from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean. This waterway was reopened under Darius I and marked at strategic points – i.e. the gulf coast (Suez/Kubri), the southern edge of the Bitter Lakes (Kabret/Shallûf), and the junction between the north–south and east–west canal at the northern edge of the Bitter Lakes (Serapeum) – by a monumental stela (the so-called “canal stelae”), but also by a fire altar, and at least one further monument. Accordingly, these locations did cater for Persian cultic/festive/representational functions besides being visible markers of a route of transport (Wasmuth 2017a: pp. 125–199, 263–269, pls. I–III; see also Tuplin 1991; Bresciani 1998; Posener 1936: especially pls. V–XV). At the first major town in the Wadi Tumilat, nowadays Tell el-Maskhuta, a further monumental stela was placed (Posener 1936: pl. IV), which is based on a different master copy. The construction inscription is substantially shortened in favor of a more detailed comment on the legitimacy of the king's rule over Egypt (Wasmuth 2017a: pp. 144–146). While the Kabret and Kubri stelae combine predominantly “Persian” and “Egyptian” faces, the Maskhuta stela has only an “Egyptian” face (Figure 20.1). To date, there is no evidence for an additional stela featuring a “Persian” version (Schweiger 1998: pp. 184–185, 605–608).

Not a juxtaposition as on these stelae but a close combination of Persian and Egyptian elements within one monument or at least one distinct part of a monument occurs in the lists of toponyms on the “Egyptian” faces of the stelae (i.e. Kubri, Kabret, and Maskhuta) and on the base of the by now headless statue of Darius I that was produced in Egypt and transferred to Susa in antiquity (Kervran et al. 1972; Perrot et al. 1974; Trichet and Vallat 1990; *here* Figure 94.8). Rather than choosing the most characteristic gesture, posture, attribute, etc. within Achaemenid and/or Egyptian tradition, the artists went for elements of high representational value and of similar associations, meaning, and functions within both cultures (and, if possible, also within

(a)



Figure 20.1 Reconstruction of the “Egyptian” and “Persian” faces of the Kabret stela. Source: From the Suez canal region; Wasmuth 2017a: Pls. II-III.

(b)

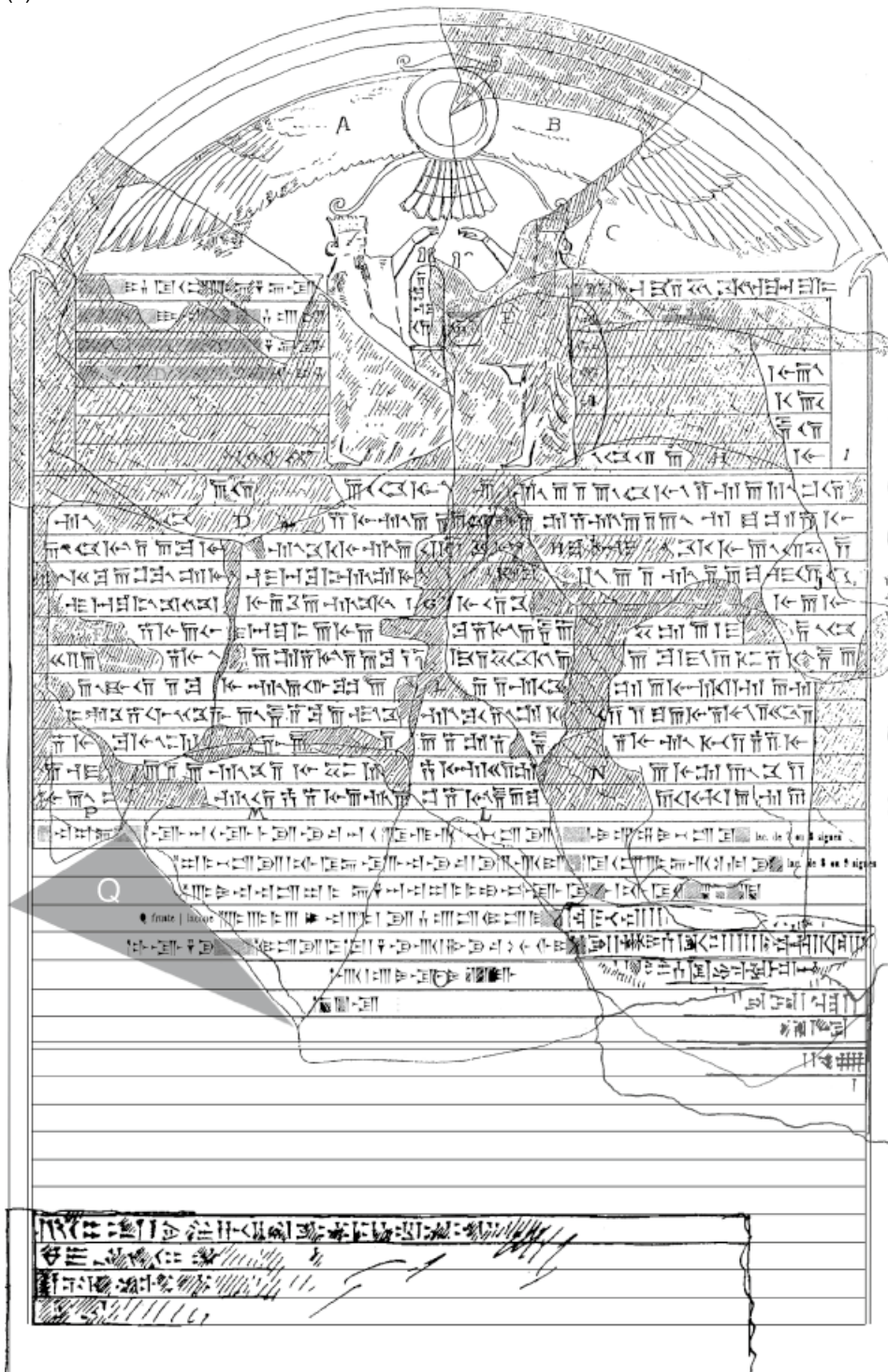


Figure 20.1 (Continued)



Figure 20.2 Stater commemorating the reconquest of Egypt. Source: From Susa; Wasmuth 2017a: p. 201 Abb. 50.

Mesopotamian royal tradition; for a detailed discussion see Wasmuth 2017a: pp. 101–124). Its original site of erection is still open to discussion; so far the temple areas of Tell el-Maskhuta and Heliopolis have been suggested (see Bresciani 1998: pp. 103, 110). The same is true for the question of how explicitly the Persian nature of the king was given prominence on this monument: dress and attributes are Persian; the inscriptions are predominantly Egyptian; posture and gesture may derive from either tradition; the head is missing and the headdress can plausibly be reconstructed to have been in either Egyptian or Persian style (as on the coins with depictions of Artaxerxes III wearing Persian court dress and an Egyptian double crown, see Allotte de la Fuÿe 1928 and *here* Figure 20.2, or a Persian crown like several other monumental statues at Susa, see Luschey 1983; see also further reading).

A third strategy of representing the king in his double role as Egyptian pharaoh and Persian Great King works by means of association. It is mainly attested in sacral art stylizing Darius not only as legitimate king of Egypt but also as a living god of the Egyptian pantheon (Wasmuth 2017a: pp. 245–249). On plaques from Karnak, his image evokes the god Hapi (Müller 1970: p. 178; *here* Figure 20.3), and several depictions from the twenty-seventh dynasty temple front in Hibis (Charga oasis) present Darius as living Horus: Darius (identified by a legend) is shown as a falcon receiving “life (*ankh*)” from the gods (Davies 1953: pl. 39). Similarly, Darius in the form of a falcon is worshipped on the stela of Padiuserpare (Vittmann 2003: p. 139 Figure 60; Sternberg-el Hotabi 2009).

The most problematic representation of the king’s cultural double role would have been the canonic scene of the Egyptian king slaying his (Nubian, Libyan, and Asiatic) foes on the pylon front of a temple. This was intentionally avoided at the temple of Hibis by omitting the pylon in the contemporary



Figure 20.3 Darius in the role of the god Hapi. Source: From Karnak; Wasmuth 2017a: p. 248 Abb. 54a.

building plan; a screen wall featuring Darius embedded in the Egyptian pantheon occupies its place at the temple front (Davies 1953: pls. 38–43). However, the right-hand panel conveys essentially the same message as the emblematic pylon scene (Figure 20.4): Darius – who appears in anthropomorphic form with falcon head and plumage – strikes the enemy par excellence



Figure 20.4 Temple front of Hibis avoiding the emblematic “slaying of the foes” scene. Source: Hibis, in situ; Wasmuth 2017a: p. 248 Abb. 54b.

(i.e. the serpent Apophis) with a lance evoking the weapon of the slaying scene (Sternberg el-Hotabi and Aigner 2006: p. 543). Because of the setting and the accompanying legend, this last picture is associated with the god Seth (of the oases and in his function as a god of foreign countries) and is to be read: “Darius, the Persian, who guarantees *maat* by slaying his foes, the living foreign Horus” (Wasmuth 2017a: p. 238, see also pp. 235–238). Interestingly enough, the composition was adapted for Ptolemaic and Roman pylon decorations, where the originally Persian lion accompanies the slaying king (Sternberg el-Hotabi and Aigner 2006: p. 543), and the hybrid depiction as anthropomorphic figure with falcon head and plumage becomes characteristic for “Seth

of the Oases” (e.g. on the walls of the Roman temples at Dakhla oasis, see Kaper 1997).

Apart from these sources of mixed influences, sources within the Egyptian cultural tradition are known (cf. Bresciani 1958; Posener 1936; Willeitner 2003; Curtis and Tallis 2005: pp. 172–173; the series *Excavations at North Saqqâra* of the Egypt Exploration Society, London): for example, parts of Achaemenid Hibis and Ghueita temple decorations (both Charga oasis), evidence for building activities in several temples in the Nile Valley and Delta (Busiris, Karnak, Elkab), the religious epitaphs for Apis (Memphis), the stelae from the Serapeum (Saqqara), the mummies from the animal necropolis at Saqqara-North, and cultic objects such as naoi (Tuna el-Gebel), handles of sistra, vessels (Tanis, Tell Muqdam/Leontopolis, Memphis, Fayyum, Karnak). The only Persian aspect of these instances is a Persian royal name.

Meanwhile, objects of a predominantly Persian character are rare in Egypt. The few examples that point to a Persian background are hard to verify due to a lack of similar corpora of sources from the Persian heartland. Most small-scale objects inscribed in Persian, namely an alabastron, a door socket, and a metal shoe of a carrying pole (Michaélidis 1943), are open to discussion regarding their genuineness due to their unknown provenance and the absence of comparable finds. Yet, there is evidence for Achaemenid metal vessels in the Tell el-Maskhuta Hoard (for similar finds see, for example, Figures 95.2 and 95.3), some jewelry and lion vessels from Tell Muqdam/Leontopolis, and the fire altars in the canal region (see above and Cooney 1965).

Surprisingly, there is no stratigraphic evidence in Egypt for a certain type of Achaemenid vessels usually associated with Egypt: vessels made of calcit alabaster inscribed with a royal label (see Posener 1936: pp. 137–151; Westenholz and Stolper 2002; Schmitt 2001). During the reign of Darius I and in the early years of Xerxes I, the inscriptions follow the Egyptian phraseology: “King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Lord of the Two Lands, *royal name*, he may live eternally; year *X*.” A different contemporary version adds the cuneiform inscription “*royal name*, the king” in Persian, Elamite, and Babylonian. During the reigns of Xerxes I to Artaxerxes III, the Egyptian phraseology is replaced by rendering the cuneiform formula into Egyptian, either as *pr-ʿ3 p3-ʿ3* or only *pr-ʿ3*, thereby transforming the Egyptian vessels into a Persian one with a “royal tag” in four official languages. In comparison with the evidence from the canal stelae and the headless statue of Darius, it is to be postulated that *p3-ʿ3* is the Egyptian rendering of the Persian title “Great King,” therefore labeling the king either as “(Egyptian) Pharaoh and (Persian) Great King” or solely as “Pharaoh” (Wasmuth 2015: pp. 218–224; Wasmuth 2017a: pp. 207–214).

A diversity of cultural traditions as well as idiosyncratic combinations characterizes the non-royal representational sources of the mid-first millennium.

Stelae (see e.g. Vittmann 2009; Bresciani 1958: pp. 177–178) and tombs (see the discussion in Aston 1999a and the series *Abusir* of the Czech Institute of Egyptology, Praha) within the Egyptian cultural tradition face the same difficulties as contemporary statues. When not dated with the reigning king’s name, they tend to be dated to the twenty-sixth dynasty or Ptolemaic period because of their unequivocally Egyptian character. However, at least with the statues of Ptahhotep (Figure 20.5) and Udjahorresnet (Figure 12.1), who are comparatively well-known figures in twenty-seventh dynasty Egypt (cf. Bareš 1999: pp. 31–43; Lopez 2015), it can be shown that non-royal art production for the Egyptian “elite” could be of the finest quality. Less definite is the interpretation of the statues’ significance: although the inscriptions appear to suggest only a partial acceptance of the ruler (Rößler-Köhler 1991: pp. 270–275), Persian decorations are conspicuous. Ptahhotep actually wears a Persian torquet as well as an Egyptian pectoral (Figure 20.5). Albeit possible that wearing the Egyptian adornment was meant as a subtle hint of opposition to the foreign ruler, it seems more convincing to interpret the statue as an act of loyalty toward both rulers: the twenty-sixth dynasty pharaoh who had

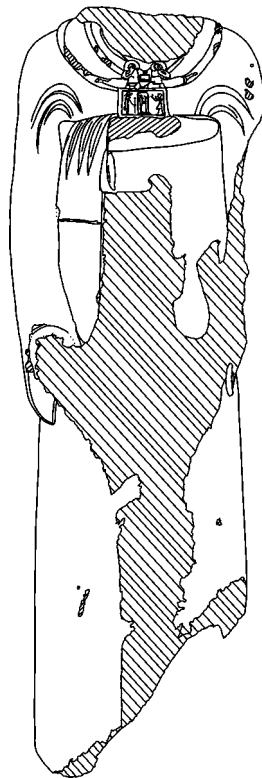


Figure 20.5 Statue of Ptahhotep displaying Egyptian and Persian “gold of honor” (unknown provenance).

advanced Ptahhotep in the early stages of his career as well as the foreign ruler who promoted him later on (Wasmuth 2017c).

The amount and state of sources available for determining how the Persian population was represented or presented itself leave much to be desired. Though completely un-Egyptian representations in the round featuring Mesopotamian/Persian elements are preserved, their exact provenance is unknown. Among these are a man carved in ivory, a woman in high relief made of terracotta, and several heads of stone (Traunecker 1995; Vittmann 2003: pp. 151–152). Whether they are to be interpreted as divine, royal or non-royal representations is still a matter of contention. Similar questions surround the terracotta heads from Memphis that feature characteristics of foreigners and probably date from the Achaemenid period (Scheurleer 1974: pp. 83–84).

Much better, though not exhaustive data are available for persons of non-Egyptian and non-Persian extraction as well as for persons of mixed parentage: notably funerary stelae for Arameans, Carians, eastern Ionians, and Phoenicians (Vittmann 2003). At least one example of unquestioned authenticity is known of a person of mixed parentage featuring Persian elements: the stela of Djedherbes (Mathieson et al. 1995; *here* Figure 20.6), son of a Persian father and an Egyptian mother, which in all likelihood dates to the fourth century BCE (Wasmuth 2017b). Probably, the composition of different registers with a mummification scene and a scene of offering/feasting is characteristic for persons of mixed parentage and/or multiple cultural identities. On close examination, the stela reveals an amazing number of different influences – elements of Persian, Egyptian, Aramaic, Phoenician, and Carian cultural traditions have been identified (Wasmuth 2017b). As the outcome looks homogenous, it can be postulated that – at least from the middle of the first millennium onward – workmanship as a stone carver in Egypt could be learned in a variety of workshops that adhered to one or several different cultural traditions.

A continuation of Persian period settlements can be postulated throughout the Egyptian realm. For a preliminary compilation of archeological sites including settlements dating to the twenty-seventh to thirty-first dynasties in Egypt see Wuttmann and Marchand 2005, esp. pp. 102–119. Nonetheless, research of specifically Persian period settlement strata is still mainly restricted to the site of Tell el-Herr in northwestern Sinai and to Elephantine at the first Nile cataract. However, pottery comparable to the Persian period levels from Tell el-Herr have been found in Naucratis, Saïs, and Buto in the western Delta; Mendes, Tanis, Tell Defenneh, and Tell el-Balamun in the Eastern Delta; Tell el-Farama and Keduia in northwestern Sinai; Tell Muqdam/Leontopolis in the southern Delta; Tell el-Maskhuta in Wadi Tumilat; Tebtynis in the Fayyum; Giza, Abusir, Saqqara, Memphis, Mostagedda, Karnak,



Figure 20.6 Funerary stela of Djedherbes showing a combination of several cultural affiliations. Source: From Saqqara; Mathieson et al. 1995: p. 27 Figure 3; reproduced by permission of Elizabeth Bettles.

Thebes, and Elephantine in the Nile Valley; as well as ‘Ayn Manawir in the Charga oasis (Defernez 2001: pp. 5–25, *passim*; Defernez and Marchand 2006: pp. 63–74; Aston 1999b: pp. 213–278, Figure 4). Similarly widespread are the coin hoards dating to the period from the twenty-seventh to the thirty-first dynasty and featuring Athenian and Levantine silver coins (Elayi and Elayi 1993: pp. 282–295; Colburn 2014: pp. 356–358).

Evidence that settlement and cultivation might even have been actively promoted has been unearthed in the Charga oasis. Building and decoration activities at several temples (Hibis, Ghueita, ‘Ayn Manawir) indicate increased administrative and cultic importance of the oasis (Willeitner 2003: pp. 22–53; Darnell 2007). Even more revealing are the findings of *qanat* systems, i.e. above- and below-ground irrigation canals and galleries tapping the artesian water reservoir beneath the Libyan desert. Though the structures themselves still have not been securely dated, the textual evidence from ‘Ayn Manawir suggests their construction to have taken place in the early twenty-seventh dynasty. With the exception of only a few texts documenting earlier settlement activity (but not the use of *qanats*), the texts administrating the use of these irrigation systems do not date before the reigns of Artaxerxes I and Darius II (Chauveau 2001: p. 137). Assuming that this is not due to a research deficit, it can be postulated that *qanats* were in use only then because of preceding construction work (probably during the reigns of Darius I and Xerxes I).

To sum up: the archeological sources from Egypt display a highly strategic approach to royal art. Either Persianhood is not expressed at all (e.g. objects and monuments that follow the Egyptian cultural tradition mentioning the foreign name rendered into Egyptian), or it is expressed through a combination of Egyptian and Persian (and to some extent also Mesopotamian) concepts of royal (or at least highest “elite”) representation. This may be deduced from the conspicuous use of attributes, gestures, and postures denoting similar ranges of meaning in both (or even all three) cultural traditions at the expense of solely royal imagery. Additionally, there is evidence for continuing cult and building activities carried out explicitly in the king’s name in the Suez Canal region, the Delta, the Nile Valley, and the oases in the western desert.

With regard to “elite” self-representation, definite assertions are impossible due to the current state of research. No object of representation can be securely attributed to a Persian official even though representational monuments of persons of mixed parentage and of foreign, non-Persian extraction are known. We may presume that quite a number of Egyptian “elite” monuments are in existence but misdated to the twenty-sixth dynasty or early Ptolemaic period. The few statues that definitely represent Egyptian officials in the service of the Persian administration or the court were fashioned within the Egyptian cultural tradition. They do, however, clearly state the owner’s loyalty by means of specific attributes or inscriptions.

While further research is needed for objects of the “non-elite” population living during the Persian period, the evidence from pottery and irrigation systems suggests a widespread continuation or even promoting of settlements throughout Egypt under the Achaemenians.

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CHAPTER 21

Asia Minor

Deniz Kaptan

Recent excavations, surveys, and publications have contributed substantially to the progress of the archeology of the Achaemenid Empire in Asia Minor, yet different perspectives associated with methodological variance in the interpretation of finds and their correlation within the imperial organization persist. The region's fragmented cultural landscape, and the effects of diverse physical geography on communities, need to be reckoned with. Rich archeological data can be found in the expansive literature about the classical sites on the coastal lines, e.g. major coastal Ionian and Karian cities, which have had a long period of excavation history, and likewise publications of sites located inland with Iron Age levels. It should be noted that the conventional terms of art history, the Greek Archaic and Classical periods, overlap the Achaemenid Empire period, and the problems of periodization partially stem from the geographic and sociocultural constructs, the Near East and the Classical world, the boundaries of which are difficult to define in Asia Minor. In the wide territorial span of the Achaemenids, the empire emerges as the connector of diverse communities across the region, notable in the archeological record.

This chapter, organized in geographic order, provides only a glimpse into select studies relevant to the Asian portion of Turkey, excluding the former land of Urartu (Figure 21.1). Illicit excavations and plunder of burials continue to be significant problems.

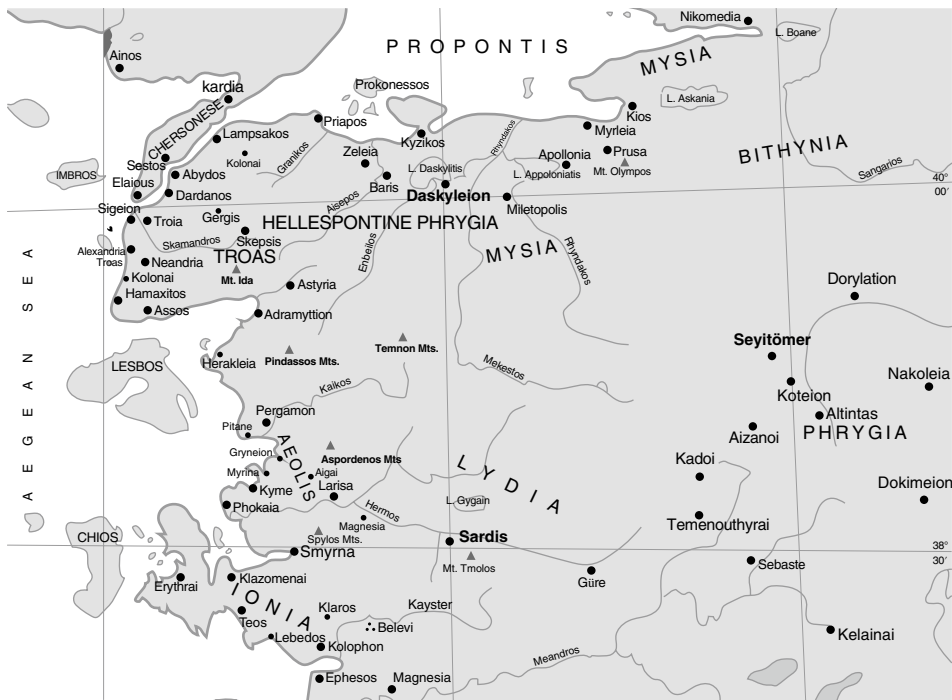


Figure 21.1 Map of northwestern Asia Minor (Deniz Kaptan).

Western Asia Minor

Inland western Asia Minor was the territory of the Lydian kingdom as the Aiolian, Ionian, and Dorian cities were located on the coastal line. The topography of this region comprises fertile river-cut valleys (Kaikos/Bakırçay, Hermos/Gediz, Kayster/Küçük Menderes, and Meandros/Büyük Menderes) and forested mountain ranges (Pindasos/Madra Dağ, Aspordenos/Yunt Dağı, Sipylus/Spil Dağı, Tmolos/Boz Dağ), all oriented in east–west directions reaching the Aegean Sea, dotted by the Aeolian and Ionian cities on the coastline, and the Lydian territory in central western Anatolia. The inland, in particular, was known for its rich mineral deposits, including iron, lead, silver, and gold, as well as marble quarries. This geography with river valleys and agricultural land on the plains contributed to the excellent road network that facilitated communication between the coast and the interior. On the foothills of the Tmolos mountain range, overlooking the Hermos plain, the Bin Tepe, the Pactolos River, and the Gygean Lake lay the city of Sardis, the Lydian capital and a major regional administrative center in the western Achaemenid Empire. Its acropolis stood over by its steep cliffs, rising more than 300 m above the Hermos plain. The site has been excavated since the middle of the twentieth century following the foundation of the Archaeological Exploration of Sardis earlier in the century.

The sack of Sardis by the Achaemenid army has been archeologically well documented. There is impressive material evidence for combats that took place in the streets of the city thanks to the carefully explored destruction debris, especially in the northern and eastern sectors of the city, in the Lydian houses, and under the Roman period theater. Among the finds are the skeletal remains of two warriors in their mid-twenties who died during combat, as indicated by fractures in their skulls and bones. During the chaotic days of the fall of the city, there was clearly no opportunity to give a proper burial to these defeated, presumably Lydians, nor were they robbed for their valuable belongings that included their weapons, a small croeseid, and a bronze and iron helmet (Cahill and Kroll 2005: pp. 590–608; Cahill 2010: pp. 339–357). Cahill cautiously suggests a date for the destruction between 550 BCE, the accession of Cyrus to power, and the conquest of Babylon by his army in 539 BCE.

The urban design of the acropolis comprised terrace walls and stairways built of worked blocks, a large portion of which were eventually recycled in the Byzantine period fortress, but the surviving parts testify to the skills of the builders. Sets of terraces belonged to a system, supporting a number of buildings on the acropolis, which may have included elements of public landscapes such as gardens (Greenwalt 1995, 2011: pp. 1116–1125). The lower city was surrounded by a strong fortification wall covering an area of about 108 ha. So far, excavations have revealed no structure that could be directly associated with the palace(s) of the Lydian rulers and the Persian satraps.

During the Achaemenid period, freestanding monumental tombs emerge in Asia Minor, reaching a peak with the construction of the Maussolleion at Halikarnassos in the second half of the fourth century BCE. The Pyramid Tomb, located on a ridge on the northern slope of the acropolis in Sardis, appears to be one of the first in this category (Ratté 2011: pp. 65, 94–99, no. 15). The structure, the remains of which consist of a stepped platform, was probably never completed. On the platform there would have been a free-standing chamber, possibly with a gabled roof. Based on the building techniques and the masonry, the monument is dated to the second half of the sixth century BCE. An associated monument with a stepped construction and a false door is Taşkule standing on the roadside of Phokaia (Cahill 1988).

Occupation and sanctuaries stretched beyond the city walls of Sardis. One of the extramural sanctuaries belonged to the goddess Cybele, active during the Achaemenid period (Cahill 2010: pp. 100–101). A second sanctuary to the south of the settlement was for Artemis. Its earliest architectural evidence, “the Lydian Altar” situated in the west end of the Hellenistic temple, is a stepped platform comparable to the Pyramid Tomb, but unlike the Pyramid Tomb it is solid, not constructed around a rubble core. A date between the late sixth and early fourth centuries BCE has been suggested (Ratté 2011: pp. 123–125).

The burial chambers of many of the tumuli at Bin Tepe, the Pactolos valley, central Lydia, and those in the Uşak-Güre area display Lydian ashlar masonry; only a few were built out of irregular blocks covered with plaster. The majority of tombs are from between the mid-sixth and mid-fifth centuries BCE, with no significant typological change from the Lydian period; a few show a variety, e.g. three chambers, pitched roofs, flat ceilings, false barrel vault, chambers with dromoi and antechambers (Roosevelt 2009: pp. 148–151).

Among portable artifacts, the deep bowl with high rim as the adaptation of Achaemenid metal original in pottery was widely available in Sardis (Dusinberre 2003: pp. 172–195). The jewelry and seals in the Istanbul Archaeological Museums from Sardis, excavated in the early twentieth century, are from tombs in the close precincts of the settlement (Curtis 1925; Dusinberre 2003: pp. 264–283; Meriçboyu 2010). Besides their artistic value, their well-recorded archeological contexts offer a significant contribution to studies exploring the social environment of their owners. In a similar social context are the retrieved contents of the vandalized tumuli from the Uşak-Güre area, known as “the Lydian Treasure” (Özgen and Öztürk 1996). The assemblage consists of 363 objects: bronze and silver tableware, incense burners, jewelry and seals, tools to make jewelry, cosmetic containers, wall painting fragments, and marble tomb furnishings. In addition to burial customs, these tumuli and their contents in central western Anatolia, including those from Milyas/northern Lycia, provide a glimpse into the lifestyle, social status, self-ascription, and wealth of the elite under Achaemenid rule.

Evidence for territorial military control is exemplarily demonstrated by a fortified stronghold at Şahankaya (Şahinkaya) in northern Lydia, where a lead sling bullet with the name of Tissaphernes was also found (Roosevelt 2009: pp. 118–121). Regional surveys in Ionia have also documented a number of fortified strongholds (Gezgin 2001: pp. 186–188).

Archeological evidence for the peaking prosperity during the fourth century BCE appears to have been demonstrated by the ambitious building activities in Ionia, Karia, and Lycia, some of which is generally attributed to the patronage of the Hekatomnids, viz. the initiation of the Temple of Athena at Priene in Ionia, designed by the architect Pytheos, which most likely took place before the arrival of Alexander. The urban development that has been observed in many of the Ionian cities likely owes its inception to the security and financial stability under Achaemenid hegemony.

Northwest

The land in the northwest consists of fertile plains cut by the rivers Rhyndakos, Enbeilos, Aisepos, and Granikos and two sizable lakes, Daskylitis and Apolloniatis. The rugged and wooded terrain of Mysian Olympus is to the

east. This is an area predominantly settled by Greeks, Phrygians, Mysians, and Lydians. From the nineteenth century onward the region attracted the attention of researchers attempting to locate Daskyleion, the legendary satrapal capital mentioned in classical sources. Discovery of several relief blocks and relief stelai in the area, and surveys focusing on a settlement mound, Hisartepe, near Ergili, gradually led to its excavation as the most likely site of the satrapal center. The stream, Karadere, an outlet of the lake and a tributary of the Rhyndakos, flows by the western slope. To the north is the wetland and the shore of Lake Manyas, a registered wildlife reserve (Figure 21.2). Standing on the mound one catches an impressive glimpse of the lake and the farming land with several tumuli visible in the horizon. This is the view of the fertile plains where small villages and estates of the landowners and the local nobility of the Achaemenid period lay. The port city of Kyzikos, an old Milesian colony, is located about 30 km to the north. This is certainly a good location for communication and trade routes connecting to the Troad and Kyzikos and inland Anatolia.

Ergili/Daskyleion has been excavated since the mid-1950s to the present, with a break from 1959 to 1988 (Akurgal 1961: pp. 170–171; Bakır 2001: pp. 169–180; İren 2010). With levels yielding rich finds from the earlier periods that include “orientalizing” east Greek and Corinthian, Attic, Lydian, and monochrome gray ware, and already surrounded by fortification walls before the Achaemenid period, the settlement mound stands out as a significant source for Iron Age studies. Continuity of spatial use throughout its history



Figure 21.2 View of Lake Manyas from Daskyleion (Deniz Kaptan).

resulted in the recycling of building materials, a matter of fact in settlement archeology not isolated to this site only. The excavation team reports destruction debris from the third quarter of the sixth century BCE possibly associated with the capture of the town by the Persians.

The Achaemenid period settlement had a series of terrace walls built in varying quality and material, the portions of which rise along the southeastern side, one segment reaching a length of 120 m. The northern end of this massive wall, preserved up to 3.75 m high, was built of mudbrick set on a stone foundation of well-worked rectangular limestone blocks. This wall also served as fortification and the upper terrace walls went through repairs and alterations over a stretch of time. The first excavation seasons in the 1950s in the southern sector of the mound revealed some direct evidence for the Achaemenid occupation: the discovery of several hundred bullae with seal impressions in a rectangular structure. It was re-excavated in 2004 (Erdoğan 2007: p. 181). In this area there are several rock-cut pits, foundations of other buildings including a three-unit structure, and a large paved courtyard with drainage (İren and Yıldızhan 2013: p. 213). The excavation team suggests that the satrapal residence/palace with attached units lay in this location. Overall the architecture of this sector is complicated, partly due to alterations and reuse, and partly to the ambiguities in our knowledge about the material evidence for civic and religious practices (Kaptan 2016: pp. 350–354). The architectural fragments of Proconnesian marble and andesite found in spolia clearly indicate that there were exquisite structures and tombs in and around the settlement, the earliest from the late sixth and second quarter of the fifth centuries BCE. They comprise volutes, lintel, and frieze fragments decorated with lotus, palmette, and rosette patterns rendered in the styles of Classical Greek Asia Minor, some attributed to Milesian workshops (Ateşlier 2001: pp. 152–160). Architectural elements also include Lydian painted terracotta tile and revetment fragments similar to those in Sardis. It is possible that such terracotta revetments were used on mudbrick structures with stone foundations, traditionally known in the region. On the northern side of the mound, an area of about 300 m² has been associated with the cult of Cybele.

The finds reveal a prosperous and cosmopolitan center. The pottery sequence, in particular, shows a rich record: Attic pottery was imported in high quantity and regional imitations were also available. Local gray ware, some bearing graffiti, continued to be produced. Adaptations of lobed and plain Achaemenid bowls constitute a significant category in pottery. Fragments of polished stone plates, some similar to those from the Persepolis Treasury and the western Anatolian burials, are among the luxury tableware. There are fragments of ivory utensils carved in animal style, horse-harness strap-dividers in the shape of boars' tusks, and tripartite socketed arrowheads commonly associated with Iranian tribes, and slingshot bullets.

The bullae, largely used on written documents (Figure 21.3), testify to the presence of administrative and economic activity (Kaptan 2002). Similar to the practice known from the Persepolis Fortification and Treasury tablets and the papyri of Arshama from Egypt, the perished documents of Daskyleion most likely recorded economic and administrative operations in and around the satrapal territory, such as records of goods, incoming and outgoing, e.g. grain, livestock, timber, related to the local warehouse/treasury and their management, the ratios and organization of the workforce, and other related issues in the area within the imperial organization. On the satrapal level, the Arshama dossier from Egypt offers an illustrious model for the perished documents of Daskyleion (Kaptan 2020). The seal impressions on the bullae provide a wealth of information about sealing practices and artistic styles. They represent scenes that have direct links to the styles and subjects known from the center of the empire, their regional adaptations, and images in Greek styles and subjects (Figures 21.3–21.6). This is a good cross section of the artistic complexity in the empire, representing images that could be recognized stylistically as Neo-Babylonian, Achaemenid, and Classical Greek, displaying an array of artists' hands at work (Kaptan 2013). The impressions of three discrete cylinders, making up more than half of the entire assemblage of bullae, carry royal names, Xerxes and Artaxerxes inscribed in Old Persian (Figure 21.6), and one bilingually in Old Persian and Babylonian (Schmitt 2002). The users of royal name seals in this regional center most probably followed a parallel practice documented by the royal archives in Iran, and carried out operations in office. There are also Aramaic inscriptions on the impressions of cylinders and stamps (Röllig 2002, Pl. 4). Overall, the inscriptions provide names of Anatolian, Greek, Babylonian, and Iranian origin, showing the seal owners/users who were involved in the transactions of the satrapal



Figure 21.3 Bulla and seal impression from Daskyleion. DS 72 on Erg. 278. Obverse and reverse (Deniz Kaptan).



Figure 21.4 Bulla and seal impression from Daskyleion. DS 112 on Erg. 260 (Deniz Kaptan).



Figure 21.5 Bulla and seal impression from Daskyleion. DS 172 on Erg. 367 (Deniz Kaptan).

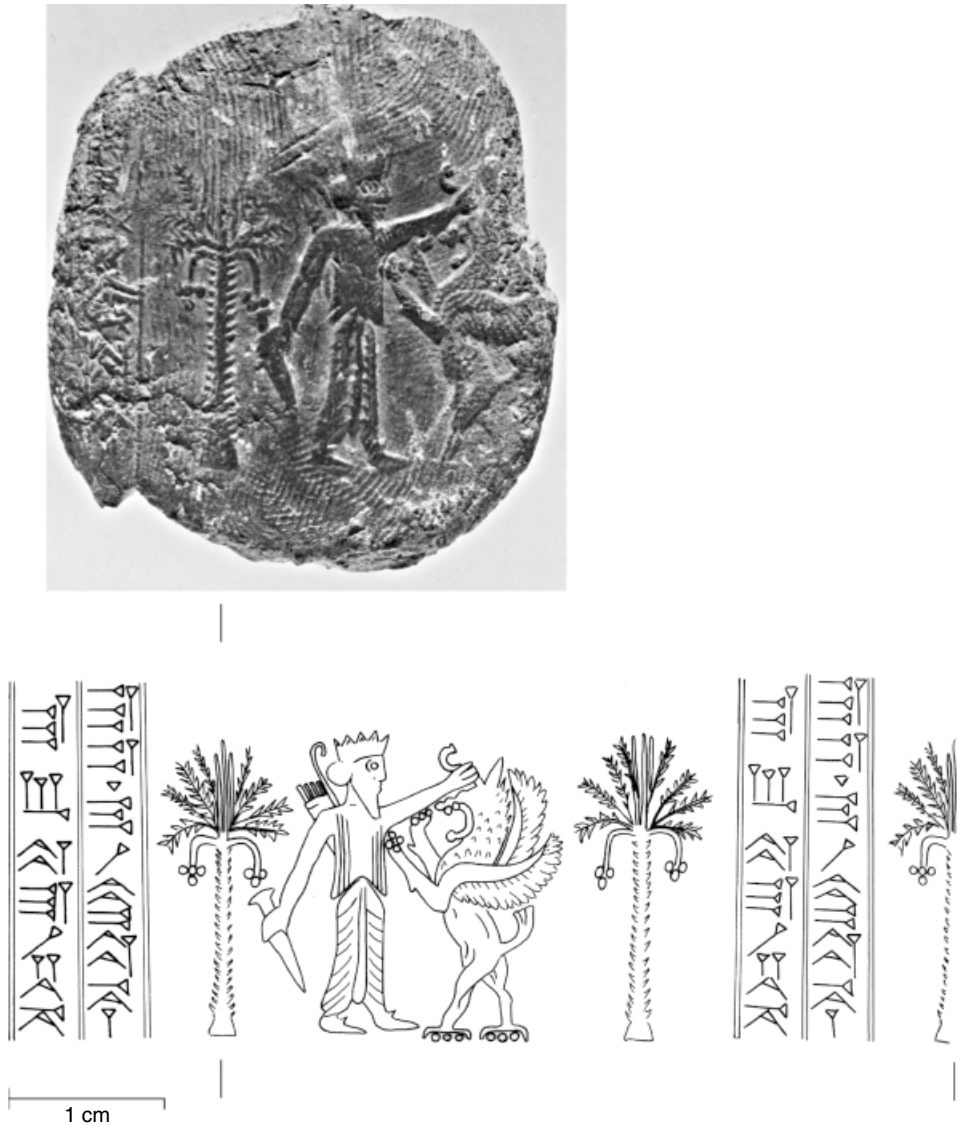


Figure 21.6 Bulla and seal impression from Daskyleion. DS 3 on Erg. 5. cylinder seal impression and composite drawing (after Kaptan 2002: Pls. 9–10).

center and could belong to any ethnic background present in the empire. The variety of artistic styles on the inscribed seals also indicates that the selection of imagery and ethnicity were independent of one another.

The fragments of relief slabs and stelai found around Daskyleion represent convoys, banquets, hunting, and rituals showing priests in long capes and women in courtly settings, some of which bear inscriptions in Aramaic and Phrygian (Borchhardt 1968: pp. 173–179, 192–208; Nollé 1992; Maffre

2007: pp. 230–240; Polat 2007; Draycott 2010: pp. 7–10). They had been removed from their original locations long ago and were reused for many purposes, such as grinding stones and troughs, and blocks in masonry. Their possible connection with the tumuli in the estates of local and Persian nobility has long been suggested.

Recent research in the area has systematically focused on settlement patterns, land use, and spatial organization, and mapped out the locations of burials and possible locations of the estates/farms/çiftliks. The survey team of the Granikos River Valley Project documented a number of sites in the area between the Kocabaş Çayı/Granikos River and Gönen Çayı/Aisepos River (Rose et al. 2007). The surface pottery shows a gap between the end of the Classical/the Achaemenid period and the Roman period, suggesting a significant change in the occupation pattern and land use by the end of Achaemenid rule. As the economy was not controlled by satrapal centers and protection was no longer available in the countryside, the estates appear to have disintegrated and people moved to the newly established Hellenistic cities.

The tumuli, which are often located near water sources and on natural ridges, blending well with the landscape, are emblematic of the prestige and social status of the elite. They also functioned as the markers of estates. At the top, stone balls, *phalloi* set into bases, were placed to mark the monument. Despite the plunder of many of the tumuli, the retrieved contents are sufficient to display the level of prosperity and the owners' affiliation with the empire. Among the numerous tumuli dating from the sixth to the end of the fourth centuries BCE, three burial sites – Kızöldün/Gümüşçay, Dedetepe, and Çan, also those near Daskyleion (e.g. Tepecik, Koru, and Kocaresul) – revealed extraordinary finds. Kızöldün, yielded two marble sarcophagi, one small and one adult size (Sevinç et al. 2001; Rose 2007). Because of its unique relief decoration the large one in Late Archaic style and dated to the end of the sixth century BCE carries significant art historical value. Known as the Polyxena Sarcophagus, it is the oldest decorated stone sarcophagus excavated in Asia Minor. The leftovers of the vandalized sarcophagus include the bones of an adult male, whereas, ironically, the relief decoration of the sarcophagus represents female-dominated scenes. The remains of a wheeled cart were also retrieved. As observed in some other tumuli in western Anatolia, the inclusion of wheels in burials appears to be a part of the funerary tradition. The brightly colored klinai in the chamber of the nearby Dedetepe burial parallel those at Aktepe and Laletepe in the south (Baughan 2008). The retrieved contents of both burials span from heirloom jewelry to wooden furniture that resemble the types in Iran, as well as musical instrument fragments that may have played a significant role in the region at funeral services. The third burial at Çan, also looted, yielded a marble sarcophagus with representations of hunt and battle on horseback. Like the tomb furnishings and spolia at the Daskyleion excavations, these sarcophagi were of Proconnesian marble, the quarries of

which seem to have been easily accessible to those around Daskyleion. Recent work at Daskyleion has also shown the inclusion of rock-cut tombs in burial practices (İren and Kasar 2015).

A small regional center was located at Seyitömer Höyük, about 25 km to the north of Kütahya. This is a strongly fortified settlement mound dating back to the early Bronze Age. The Achaemenid period levels yielded import Attic pottery, local adaptations of Achaemenid bowls in pottery, and a small group of bullae (Kaptan 2010; Coşkun 2015; Grave et al. 2016). The archeological contexts of some of the bullae associate them with a relatively large structure on the mound where subterranean silos for storage were also excavated. The settlement was conveniently located close to the intersection of an ancient route that was clearly in use in the Achaemenid communication network. There are two gaps in its occupation history, one between the end of the Middle Bronze Age and the early fifth century BCE, and the second toward the end of the fourth century BCE and the early Hellenistic period, indicating an evident resettlement during the Achaemenid period, most probably for its convenient location for the collection and distribution of revenues. Overall, the architecture and the bullae suggest the presence of a regional warehouse, located on a key point in the road system that connected northwestern Asia Minor to the inland and coastal areas.

Black Sea Area and Central Anatolia

Several rock-cut tombs in Paphlagonia, some decorated with reliefs, present a variety of types (von Gall 1966; Summerer and von Kienlin 2010). Their precise dating is difficult. Based on similarities to Achaemenid types, the bulls, lions, and winged creatures on the reliefs, as well as animal protomes used as column capitals, the tombs with temple-like façades at Kalekapı in the province of Kastamonu, and Direklikaya near Salarköy/Boyabat probably date from the Achaemenid period if not early Hellenistic with prolonged Achaemenid characteristics. Notable also are a few finds from Oluz Höyük, a settlement mound near Amasya; e.g. pottery bowls with offset carinated rims and Achaemenid period seals (Dönmez 2015, figs. 15–16, 28). Currently, several regional surveys have been mapping out the settlement and land use in this long-neglected area, one specifically focusing on the Achaemenid period (Johnson 2010).

Gordion, the former capital city of Phrygia, has been noted by its excavators as a dynamic settlement during the Achaemenid period even though it lost its famed political position. Its location on the juncture of major routes in the east–west direction played a significant role in maintaining the city’s vibrant life. The arrival of the Achaemenids was documented archeologically by the destruction of the Küçükhöyük fortress. The megaron plan, typical of the Phrygian period, was in use during the Achaemenid period. The production

of goods, bone, stone, ivory, and metal artifacts fed the prosperity, well displayed by the Painted House in architecture and its wall paintings, seals, fine pottery, transport amphorai of import wine, and the use of molded glass vessels in daily use among portable items (Voigt and Young 1999; Jones 2005: p. 116; Dusinger 2005: pp. 24–27, 51–73).

In the Phrygian highland, the architectural remains at Midas City point to the presence of a prosperous town (Haspels 1971: pp. 139–146). The tumbled fragments of the monumental reliefs of a rock-cut tomb, Yılan Taş at Köhnüş valley, impressively show the visual aspects of intricate military identities of the elite during the Achaemenid period (Draycott 2010: pp. 17–19; Haspels 1971: pp. 129–137; Akurgal 1961: p. 306, Figure 19).

The preliminary reports of a recently launched project at Ovaören-Yassihöyük reveal the presence of a significant settlement in Cappadocia (Şenyurt 2014: pp. 101, 106).

Karia and Lycia

The people in Karia and Lycia had complex ethnic backgrounds with connections to Luwians of the Bronze Age, and close contacts with the Dorian settlements in the west. Lycia occupied the rugged terrain of the western Tauros mountains, dominated by two massifs, Massicytos (Akdağ) in the east and Solymna (Beydağ) in the west, both rising steeply from the Mediterranean coast to inland with peaks exceeding 3000 m. To the northeast lie Milyas and Kibyrtis, with the Elmalı plain in the central plateau at an altitude of 1100 m. These mountain ranges and river valleys created natural boundaries within the region itself and played a significant role in the local rulers' (dynasts/*ağas*) control of their local communities, in the service of the Achaemenid king. The region's rugged terrain, however, did not obstruct its communication with the outside world. The local rulers left their mark on the archeological record most visibly through heroa and sarcophagi that reflected their competitive political and social identities in the display of monumentality and themes used in relief sculpture, e.g. the pillar tomb known as the Harpy Monument and the temple tombs, the Nereid Monument in Xanthos, the Gölbaşı-Trysa Heroon, the Heroon of Perikle in Limyra, and the Payawa sarcophagus. People in Lycia also commissioned rock-cut tombs of varying size and decorations, presumably based on their affordability. A recent study documents the rock-cut tombs in the territory of Limyra and demonstrates that they were predominantly produced during the first half of the fourth century BCE (Kuban 2012). The local mint coinage bearing the names of local rulers accompanied by portraits – and subsequently their disappearance later in the fourth century, probably due to the Hekatomnids' rise to power in the regional

administration – as well as inscriptions, including a multilingual in Greek, Aramaic, and Lycian on public display at Xanthos (Metzger 1979; Briant 2001: pp. 17–19), reflect the shifting dynamics in the region quite well.

The urban development in Xanthos during the Achaemenid period showed two different zones: the Lycian acropolis, densely occupied, with monuments and palatial structures, and the fortified city itself with buildings scattered in the empty space. A large elaborate structure in the southeast had a long occupation history, the first phase of which dated back to the seventh century BCE (des Courtils 2008: pp. 1634–1641, 1651; Marksteiner 2005: pp. 38–40).

Regional surveys have documented walls of watch towers and garrisons in strategic points widespread in the region, one for example at Köybaşı, comparable to those at Meydancikkale in Cilicia and Herakleia/Latmos in Karia (Marksteiner 2005: pp. 30, 37).

Lycia provides representations of city landscapes in relief sculpture, showing hilly terrains with pillar sarcophagi on terraces surrounded by fortresses and towers (Jacobs 1987: pp. 61–64; Childs 1978: pp. 10–16). Like the free-standing heroa at vantage points in the Lycian territory, commanding views of the area were chosen also for the tumuli with painted chambers on the Elmalı plain at Milyas. The largest settlement mound Hacimusalar Höyük/Choma is located nearby. The communities of Milyas lived in a contact zone of Lycia, Kibyra, Pisidia, and Phrygia together, and this seems to have found its reflections in the material culture, as illustrated by the painted tombs at Kızılbél tomb, dated to c. 525 BCE and at Karaburun dated to the 470s BCE (Mellink 1978; Mellink et al. 1998). The episodes of banqueting, military victory, funerary rites, and the realia in the paintings of the Karaburun chamber can be viewed as visual expressions of social identity, status, and prestige of the elite under Achaemenid hegemony. The phialai represented on the paintings find their counterparts in silver in the burials of the Achaemenid period (e.g. Uşak-Güre tumuli), as well as in bronze from the Phrygian milieu as demonstrated by the nearby tumuli at Bayındır on the Elmalı plain (Özgen and Öztürk 1996: p. 26). We are again reminded of the Phrygian past by the use of wood for the construction of the painted chamber of the Tatarlı tumulus near Dinar (Mellink et al. 1998: pp. 55–56; Summerer 2007; von Kienlin 2010: pp. 116–119; critical to the Achaemenid impact Jacobs 2014).

The architectural remains at Latmos display well-built fortification walls with 14 towers that enclosed a fort inside, dating from the first quarter of the fourth century BCE (Peschlow-Bindokat 1989). Another survey on the Karian landscape documented 48 sites with fortifications, about a half indicating strongholds, and a quarter with presumably palatial structures including the foundations of a large building at Halikarnassos attributed to Maussollos (Carstens 2011). Halikarnassos, the home site of Maussolleion, the most

well-known structure of the Hekatomnid era, has been explored by a Danish team since the mid-1960s (cf. Jeppesen and Lutrell 1986: pp. 13–113 for the testimonies of classical sources). The sanctuary of Zeus at Labraunda, with its immaculate *andrones* passibly used for ritual banquets, also might have functioned for palatial purposes, as audience halls by the Hekatomnids (Hellström 1991, 1996. Cf. recent work by Henry 2012; Henry et al. 2016). Used as acroteria, the sphinxes excavated in the sanctuary reflect the west Anatolian version of Achaemenid types (Gunter 1995: pp. 21–29). Like Lycia, the chamber tombs and rock-cut tombs in Karia mostly date from the fourth century BCE. The rock-cut tomb at Berber İni/Mylasa and the unfinished monumental tomb at Uzunyuva/Mylasa are exemplary in connecting the center of the empire and the local dynasts conceptually (Henry 2010; Rumscheid 2010).

Cilicia and the Southeast/Middle Euphrates

In the mountainous Cilician terrain, on a rugged hilltop between Silifke and Anamur, is Meydancikkale, ancient Kiršu. The name is mentioned in two Achaemenid period Aramaic inscriptions at the site (Davesne and Laroche-Traunecker 1998; Casabonne 2004: pp. 151–165). Ruled by the family of Appuāšu under Achaemenid control, Kiršu was a strongly protected local residential fort that could patrol the coast and the mountain zone, and manage the exploitation of timber resources. Some of the reused blocks, associated with a large structure, display reliefs reminiscent of the gift bearers represented in the reliefs of Persepolis. Images on Cilician coins issued predominantly between c. 450 and 375 BCE reflect the complex sociopolitical connections in the region.

Kinet Höyük near Issus plain was a fortified settlement during the fourth century BCE. A large mudbrick structure dated to c. 400 BCE bears similar features to those at Oylum Höyük near Killis and Hacinebi at the Birecik Dam area (Gates 2005: pp. 61–62).

Excavations of the earlier levels of Dülük Baba Tepesi by the sanctuary of the Roman god Jupiter Dolichenus, 10 km from Gaziantep, revealed that the hilltop of the site was already in use as a sanctuary earlier during the Iron Age (Schachner 2011). An Achaemenid-type bull capital of basalt, found in a fill, has been associated with a large structure that served as a main building in the sanctuary. This area also yielded rich finds consisting of seals and jewelry in Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid styles.

The cemeteries at Tilbes and Hacinebi at the Birecik Dam area on the Euphrates, which yielded seals, jewelry, and pottery, appear to be contemporary to the Devehüyük cemetery (Gil Fuensanta and Crivelli 2010; McMahon 1996; Moorey 1980). The settlements at Tilbes, Surtepe, and Hacinebi show

no sign of destruction in the beginning of Achaemenid rule, nor after their demise, suggesting relatively smooth transitions to alternative hegemonic establishments. Excavations in these settlements revealed significantly large structures that were in use during the Achaemenid period. The structure at Surtepe, with mudbrick walls preserved up to 3 m in parts, finds its nearby counterpart excavated at Mezra Teleilat, located 7 km to the south of Birecik (comparable architecture also at Tille: Blaylock 2009). It is an impressive building with magazines and storage units that had access to a large courtyard in the middle (Şenyurt 2006). Fragments of tablets in late Neo-Babylonian cuneiform were found on the floor. This mudbrick structure appears to have served as a regional residence and a warehouse where revenues were stored and presumably distributed in the middle Euphrates area.

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CHAPTER 22

Caucasus Region

Florian S. Knauss

While the written sources referring to the Caucasus in the Achaemenid period are widely quiet (Lordkipanidze 2000: pp. 4–7), the archeological evidence from the region south of the Great Caucasus is strikingly rich. The countries north of this mountain range, i.e. Dagestan, Chechnya, Ingushetia, north Ossetia, and the Kuban region, may be omitted here as we lack discernible Achaemenid remains from there, and the Persian domination of this area was certainly brief (Jacobs 2000, 2006).

According to Herodotus (3.97), in the fifth century BCE the Persian rule reached as far as the Caucasian mountains. While “Armina” is already mentioned as a Persian satrapy in the Bisotun inscription, the territories of the former soviet republics of Georgia and Azerbaijan, as well as the northern part of Armenia, became part of the empire at the latest when the Persian army marched through this region during Darius I’s disastrous campaign against the Scythians in 513/12 BCE. The Caucasus formed the northern border until 330 BCE (Gagoshidze 1996: pp. 125–126; Jacobs 2006; Knauf 2009: pp. 299–300; contra Hewsen 1983: p. 128; Lordkipanidze 2000: pp. 9–11; Bill 2010: pp. 24–25).

Already in the nineteenth century spectacular finds attracted the interest of scholars, the best known being the Akhalgori and Kazbeg treasure (Smirnov 1909, 1934; Boardman 2000: p. 191 fig. 5.73; Lordkipanidze 2001; Summerer 2006), often including Achaemenid metal vases and jewelry. Gagoshidze was the first to emphasize the important role of the Achaemenids in Georgia (1979) and treated the time of the Achaemenid Empire as a distinct

and important period in the development of Georgian art and architecture (1996). Tsetskhladze (1993/1994, 1994, 2001) has been very generous concerning the attribution of items to Achaemenid workshops. Armenian research mainly focused on Urartian monuments, whereas the Achaemenid era was fairly neglected. Even from major sites the evidence from the period of Persian domination has been published only briefly (Oganesjan 1961, 1980; Martirosjan 1974; Zardarian and Akopian 1994; Santrot 1996: pp. 178–179, 187–189, 196–203, 208, 212, 222–223; Ter-Martirossov 2001; Kanetsyan 2001). Recent investigations (Badalyan et al. 2008; Heinsch et al. forthcoming) may help to improve the situation. For the western part of Trans-Caucasia – belonging to Colchis and Armenia in antiquity, now Turkish territory – there is hardly any archeological evidence available. For Azerbaijan, diachronical overviews as well as detailed studies of single sites are still lacking. For the time of Achaemenid rule most of the country is *terra incognita* until the present day (Chalilov 1985; Schachner 2001: pp. 298–320). A few years ago (Knauss 2005a, 2006) I gave an account of relevant sites as well as important findings and results from the Caucasus. In the meantime, excavations have enlarged our knowledge significantly. Yet, the actual state of research still suffers from a considerable imbalance of archeological investigations. For a long time scholars emphasized the feebleness of Achaemenid traces in archeological records. The Achaemenid imprint was hardly visible in most of the provinces. All the more impressive are the archeological findings in the Caucasus (Figure 22.1), in particular in Georgia. Since the fifth century BCE precious luxury goods such as glass phialai, so-called Kohl-tubes, as well as stamp- and cylinder seals, can be found in rich Colchian and Iberian burials (Makharadze and Saginashvili 1999; Gagošije and Saginašvili 2000: figs. 1.1–6, 2.3, 3.1–2; Knauss 2006: p. 85 figs. 7–8; Dzhavakhishvili 2007; Kakhidze 2007). They had been produced in Achaemenid workshops in Iran, Asia Minor, or the Levant. Even metal fittings, remaining parts of wheels belonging to an Achaemenid type of chariot, have been found in a burial at Uplistsikhe in Iberia (Kipiani 2000; Knauss 2006: p. 92 fig. 15). From the late sixth century BCE indigenous potters adopted technological inventions as well as new shapes from Persia (Gagoshidze 1996: p. 125; Ludwig 2010: pp. 103, 109–112). In late Achaemenid times we find imports of “classical triangle ware” as well as locally made small jugs imitating the shape and decoration of Iranian prototypes. However, Persian gold and silver objects outnumber all other categories of eastern luxury. Possibly as diplomatic gifts, some of the characteristic Achaemenid bracelets and silver vessels reached the Caucasus (Treister 2007: pp. 83–92; Knauss 2009; Miller 2010). Several items may have found their way to ancient Georgia by trade. Especially in Colchis, rich burials often contained Greek imports, mostly pottery (Sens 2009), but sometimes we find Attic vases together with sumptuous Achaemenid tableware (Kakhidze 2004).

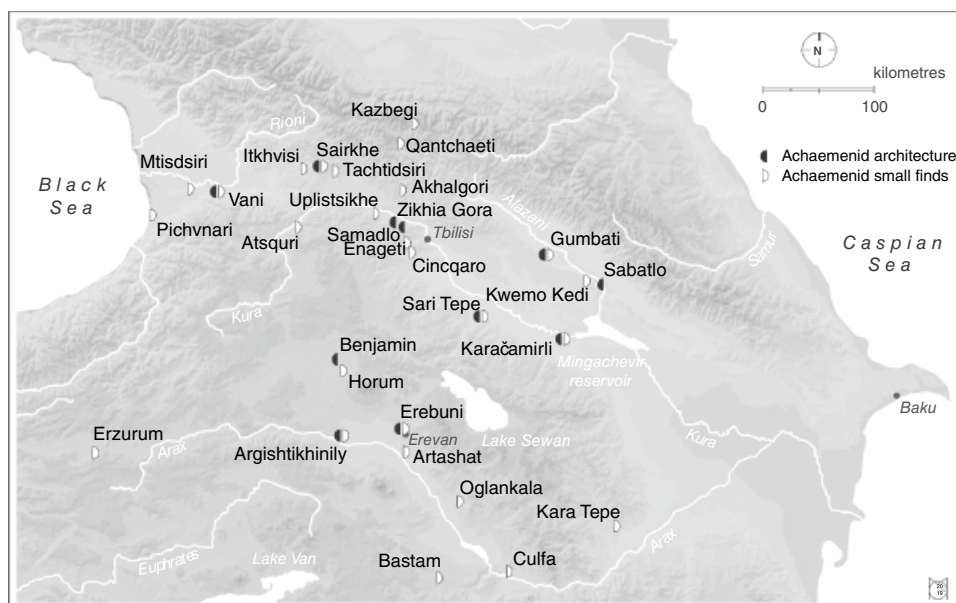


Figure 22.1 Achaemenid and Achaemenizing monuments in the Caucasus.

By and by, local Colchian and Iberian products, painted pottery, gold and silver bowls as well as jewelry show significant influence from Achaemenid models. It is obvious that the local aristocracy was keen on prestigious luxury items fashionable among the Persian elite at that time in order to set themselves apart from the ordinary people. However, the demand for Persian (as well as for Greek) luxury goods soon overtook supply. No wonder that the highly developed Colchian gold- and silversmiths produced copies as well as local variants of the Persian vessels and jewelry (Gagoshidze 1997; Boardman 2000, 196 figs. 5.80, 5.83; Knauß 2009).

Already the famous horse-shaped pendants from the “Akhagori treasure,” a rich burial of a woman, are of local production – for instance, the abundant use of granulation, the net pattern as well as the triangles on the back of the horses find no match in Achaemenid jewelry – but the Colchian goldsmiths had Achaemenid models in mind as the horse breed, the battlement pattern on the rim of the base plate, and the lobes on the breast of the horses betray (Smirnov 1934: pp. 23–29 Pl. 3.26; Gagoshidze 1997: pp. 135–136 Pl. 23.1; Knauß 2009: pp. 292–293 Pl. 1.4).

Gold diadems comprised of a twisted rod terminating in two rhomboid plaques and fastened by a central hook are a Colchian innovation. The iconography, however, repoussé decoration with animal combat scenes, is very much indebted to eastern, namely Persian, models (Kacharava and Kvirkvelia 2008: pp. 82–83 figs. 2–3). A silver rhyton with a goat-shaped protome was

found in a burial in Mtsdziri which can be dated to the fourth century BCE. Typologically it comes close to Achaemenid prototypes, however, some ornaments – cable pattern, ivy tendril – are of Greek origin. This combination as well as some local features – an indigenous mythological creature, triangle pattern – make sure that the rhyton from Mtsdziri has been worked by a local craftsman (Knauß 1999a). In the case of the golden bracelets, Achaemenid panthers or ibexes for the endings are sometimes replaced by wild boars (Knauß 2009: p. 294 Pl. 1.7).

Most of the metal vessels in Colchian tombs probably have been manufactured in Achaemenid workshops in western Anatolia (Miller 2007, 2010; Treister 2007: pp. 83–92. 97–101; Knauß 2009: pp. 294–299). There are goblets, rhyta, and numerous phialai with almond-shaped embossing, lotus palmettes, stylized swan heads. However, some pieces were made by local craftsmen, who copied such imports. After a while, they created new shapes and motifs combining foreign and local elements (Kacharava and Kvirkvelia 2008: Pl. 44b, 45b–c; p 209 no. 26; Treister 2007: figs 8, 9; Knauß 2009: pp. 295–296, 298, 299 Pls. 2.3; 3.5).

The Armenian delegation on the reliefs of the Apadana stairway is carrying metal amphorae with two griffon-handles. Hence, we may suppose that such typical Achaemenid vessels have been made in Armenian workshops. In fact, there are a few Achaemenid metal bowls, rhyta, and bracelets in Armenia (Santrot 1996: nos. 180–185, 194; Boardman 2000: pp. 187–188 figs. 5, 68. 69); however, at least the pottery does not display a similar external influence as in Colchis or Iberia.

From several sites in western and central Azerbaijan we know ceramic bowls of local manufacture which resemble Achaemenid prototypes (Narimanov 1960: fig. 3; Ismizade 1965: p. 215–217 fig. 19.1–3; Furtwängler 1995: fig. 15.6; Knauss 2006: pp. 98–99 fig. 19; Babaev and Knauß 2010: figs. 29.1–4). Therefore, we may assume that Persian luxury was prevalent here, too. Unfortunately, no extensive cemeteries of the Achaemenid period have been excavated in Azerbaijan so far.

The pottery as well as precious objects give ample proof of close contacts of the Albanian, Colchian, and Iberian population with the Achaemenid Empire. Nevertheless, these items may have found their way to the Caucasus through trade or as diplomatic gifts. They do not necessarily signify Persian presence in this region.

The value of monumental architecture is entirely different, especially since recent excavations have shown that the Iron Age architecture in central and eastern Georgia, i.e. Iberia, before the arrival of the Persians was rather modest (Knauss 2005b). The situation at least in western Azerbaijan seems to have been similar.

On the outskirts of Kazakh, Azerbaijan, in the Kura valley, the western part of an extensive structure was uncovered in the 1950s at a site named Sari Tepe. The outer walls with casemates, towers, and protrusions on its exterior lend this building a fortificational character; however, limestone column bases show that it was not a fortress. Several features remind us of oriental models. Bell-shaped bases of a type well known from Susa and Persepolis as well as the pottery confirm that the builder-owner in Sari Tepe had close ties with Achaemenid Persia (Narimanov 1960: p. 163 fig. 2; Kipiani 1993: Pl. 2–4).

Excavations at Karacamirli, a village near Shamkir in the Kura valley, approximately 80 km east of Sari Tepe, revealed a huge architectural complex of the fifth century BCE. An impressive mudbrick building (Figure 22.2) adorned with limestone column bases – bell-shaped (Figure 22.3) and torus bases – has been uncovered on a small mound called Gurban Tepe in the center of a walled area measuring 450 m × 425 m (Knauß 2011: pp. 399–407). A propylaeum on Ideal Tepe formed the gorgeous entrance to this area. Here, again, we find fine bell-shaped limestone bases (Knauss et al. 2010: figs. 3–4). A comparison with the Hadish, the private palace of Xerxes I at Persepolis, leaves no doubt that the great building on Gurban Tepe served as the palace of a Persian magistrate. The monumental gate house on Ideal Tepe likewise followed prototypes from Persepolis; it copied the ground plan of the so-called Central Building (Knauss et al. 2010: p. 117 figs. 2, 8; Knauß 2011: pp. 404, 406; Knauß and Babaev 2016). After they had passed through the propylaeum, visitors crossed a garden (*paradeisos*) before they entered the palace from the east. Chance finds of architectural sculpture indicate that there were even more monumental buildings in the vicinity. Some of them have been partially excavated: a storehouse on Rizvan Tepe some 750 m southeast of the palace, a large rectangular structure with columns in the southern front 300 m north of Gurban Tepe, served as residential building, whereas the ground plan and the purpose of a mudbrick building 900 m northeast of the palace remain unclear. Finally, a geomagnetic survey has revealed a large rectangular building near the northwestern corner of the enclosing wall (Babaev et al. 2009: pp. 316–317 fig. 4; Knauß 2011: p. 406 fig. 15). Despite the impressive analogies to buildings in Persepolis, the spacious architectural ensemble at Karacamirli rather reminds us of Cyrus' residence in Pasargadae. While in the vicinity, some older settlements of the local population apparently were abandoned in the late sixth or early fifth century BCE, contemporaneously with the palace pit houses were built on virgin soil just 950 m north of Gurban Tepe at a place called Dara Yatax. It is obvious that the Persian conquerors enforced a kind of *synoikismos* in order to have enough labor force available nearby.

The older indigenous architecture lacks not only the monumental size and complex ground plan but also a number of constructional details of the



Figure 22.3 Gurban Tepe: bell-shaped column bases.

such magnificent buildings. Ground plans as well as column bases and capitals show that the builder-owners had close relationships to Achaemenid Persia; architects and craftsmen must have been trained in Achaemenid workshops at least.

In eastern Georgia we find similar structures as in western Azerbaijan. The remains of a monumental mudbrick building in the Alasani valley at a site called Gumbati bear resemblance to the palace on Gurban Tepe at Karacamirli situated just 70 km to the south (Furtwängler 1995; Furtwängler and Knauf 1996; Knauf 2000). The bell-shaped column bases from Gumbati show marked similarities with bases from the site in Azerbaijan. Petrological examinations have proven that both of them come from the same quarry.

In Sabatlo, situated midway between Gumbati and Karacamirli in the Alasani valley, at an important junction chance finds of fine column bases hint at another important Achaemenid center.

Further west, in Zikhia Gora, central Georgia, a fragment of a column base of the same type came to light (Kipiani 1987: pp. 6–11 Pl. 2–5; Zkitiřvili 1995: pp. 88–89 figs. 5–6; Gagořidze and Kipiani 2000). More interesting is a bull-protome capital from this site. It is a provincial adaption of prototypes well known from Persepolis and Susa. The dating of this capital still is a matter of debate (Knauf 1999c: pp. 180–181).

In the late fifth or early fourth century BCE a tower was erected in Samadlo, central Georgia (Gagoshidze 1979, 1996: p. 130 fig. 3). The building recalls Achaemenid models such as the Zendan-e Sulaiman in Pasargadae and the Kaabah-e Zardusht in Naqsh-e Rostam. The archeological context supports a religious function of the tower in Samadlo.

Unlike in Georgia or Azerbaijan there already existed a local tradition of monumental architecture at least in the southern part of Armenia. The Urartian fortress Erebuni is situated on the eastern outskirts of Erevan. According to the archeological evidence, the fortress had not been destroyed at the time of the fall of the Urartian Empire, whereas Karmir Blur (Teişebai URU) on the northwestern border of Erevan, residence of the Urartian governor of Transcaucasia, was razed to the ground and abandoned in the second half of the sixth century BCE. It may be that in the southern part of Armenia a number of former Urartian residences has been reused with minor modifications during Achaemenid rule. This has been claimed for Erebuni and Argishtikhinily (Ter-Martirossov 2001; Kanetsyan 2001). However, recent investigations have raised serious doubts whether Erebuni was an important administrative center in Achaemenid times (Stronach et al. 2010: p. 126).

The situation was different in the northern part of Armenia beyond the boundaries of the former Urartian Empire. There must have been an important Achaemenid administrative center at Benjamin, about 10 km southwest of Kumairi (Zardarian and Akopian 1994: p. 187 fig. 6; Santrot 1996: pp. 187–189; Ter-Martirossov 2001: pp. 158–161). The shape of the column bases, worked in local black tufa, is reminiscent of the finds at Sari Tepe, Karacamirli, and Gumbati.

Bell-shaped column bases are exclusively known from the Achaemenid era and only within the Persian Empire. Outside the major centers in Iran and Babylonia the only findspot so far is the Caucasus (Knauf 1999b: p. 104 fig. 15), nowhere else within or beyond the borders of the vast empire.

The discovery of monumental architecture (Kipiani 1987, 1993), closely related to models from the center of the empire, proves at least temporary Persian presence on the northwestern border of the empire. The distribution of sites with Achaemenid architecture (Figure 22.1) suggests that there existed a kind of network of administrative centers. As the capital of the satrapy (Armina?) must have been somewhere else (at Van Kale?), the resident of the palace in Karacamirli certainly was a Persian magistrate below the satrapal level (Khatchadourian 2016: pp. 146–150). But how can we explain the enormous size and grandeur of the building on Gurban Tepe? Xenophon (*Anabasis* 4.4.2) reports that the satrap Orontes had a palace (βασιλείον) in a village in Armenia. Maybe the palace served as the satrap's residence when he stayed in Karacamirli during a journey through the land under his control.

The Persian residence in Karacamirli is a clear instance of *imitatio regis* which Xenophon mentions in his *Kyrou paideia* (8.6.10–14). The edifice on Gurban Tepe is the largest ancient building in the whole Caucasus. Moreover, genuine Achaemenid architecture on the periphery of the empire is most remarkable, since there was hardly any similar building outside of Persia until recently. To this day we are completely lacking excavated satrapal palaces all

over the Achaemenid Empire. Karacamirli may help us imagine their appearance. However, in other parts of the empire where the Persians met with developed cultures (e.g. in Babylonia, Egypt, Anatolia, Syria), the conquerors refrained from implementing their architectural models; instead, local traditions dominated (Knauf 2011: pp. 406–407).

The sheer number of Achaemenid and Achaemenizing artifacts found in Georgia is striking and it reflects a paradigmatic process of acculturation of the Colchians and Iberians. The local elite tried to copy the luxurious lifestyle of the Persian noblemen. Probably, it was not necessary to introduce the habit of the symposion in this region. However, the Colchian aristocracy appreciated the Persian (and Greek) paraphernalia. Furthermore, the iconographic evidence shows a spread of the oriental practice of balancing wine bowls on the fingertips (cf. Xenophon, *Kyroupaideia* 1.3.8–9). Such an attestation of Persian drinking manner can be found on a recently discovered silver belt as well as on the famous fourth-century gold finger-ring with the inscription “Dedatos,” both from Vani (Kacharava and Kvirkvelia 2008: pp. 41–42 fig. 17 [reversed image]; Sens 2009: p. 199 Pl. 53.4; Knauf 2009: p. 299 Pl. 3.6).

Future research in Georgia might concentrate on possible trade routes. In the light of silver phialai from workshops in Lydia especially, the archeological exploration of southern Georgia, e.g. in the Mtkvari River valley (Licheli 2007), and in southwestern Adjara seems to be promising. Of course, investigations in northeastern Anatolia would help significantly to complement our knowledge of the Caucasus in antiquity.

The lack of a similarly impressive archeological record in northern Armenia and Azerbaijan may be explained by a lesser degree of archeological fieldwork. An interesting site is Oglankala in Nahicevan. It is one of the largest late Iron Age fortified sites in Azerbaijan. The preliminary analysis of the pottery suggests a date in the time of the “Median” or Achaemenid Empire. There has been a monumental edifice with a hypostyle hall (Schachner 2001: pp. 310–311, 313, 318 fig. 42–44; Ristvet et al. 2009, 2012), yet, its dating remains doubtful.

The Persian impact on the material culture of ancient Georgia is impressive. We may suppose that the situation in Azerbaijan was similar; however, the sparse archeological evidence makes any judgment unwise. A close investigation of the local settlement at Dara Yatax in the vicinity of the Achaemenid palace in Karacamirli might help for a better understanding of the relationship between the local population and their foreign rulers.

The Persian conquest of Armenia did not have such far-reaching effects on the material culture as in Azerbaijan and Georgia. Yet, a thorough analysis of the transition from Urartian (via Median) to Achaemenid rule still has to be done. So far, it seems that the local tradition of Armenia was much stronger than in the neighboring countries. This is true not only for the architecture but also for the applied arts.

The aftermath of Achaemenid rule in the Caucasus is unique insofar as at several sites in Georgia there is strong evidence for continuity rather than a harsh break (Knauss 2006: pp. 107–114, 2008: pp. 52–62, 2014: pp. 141, 144). Obviously local vassals of the Great King stuck to Achaemenid traditions even after the fall of the empire because they owed their regional position of power and their legitimation to the foreign rulers.

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CHAPTER 23

The Empire's Northeast

Claude Rapin

Extending to the east of the Caspian Sea and beyond the Hindukush range, the northeastern part of the Achaemenid Empire belongs, from a cultural point of view, to the Iranian world from the second millennium BCE. Its area covers the present northeastern Iran, northern Afghanistan, and part of the five Central Asian republics issued from the USSR. From its conquest by Cyrus and Darius I during the last third of the sixth century BCE until the expedition of Alexander the Great which concluded the reign of Darius III, the territory from an administrative point of view was distributed between Hyrcania, Parthia, Aria, Margiana and Bactria, Sogdiana, Chorasmia, and the northeastern peripheral Saka/Scythian territories (Vogelsang 1992).

Socioeconomic Context

The region is shared between sedentary populations dwelling along a net of irrigated oases and agro-pastoral and nomadic populations aligned along the foothills or in the large steppic areas bounding the oases.

To the west, the Parthian and Margian territories stretched between the Kopet Dag and the Kara-kum desert encircling the Murghab delta, while to the northwest, on the delta of the Amu-darya between the desert and the Aral sea, Chorasmia constituted a deeply sedentarized peripheral extension of the empire (Kidd and Betts 2010). To the east, along the Oxus frontier (Wakhsh river and Amu-darya), Bactria and southern Sogdiana formed a densely inhabited

area (the “Bactro-Sogdian depression”) centered on Bactra. To the northeast, the natural resources of the Zeravshan enriched Samarkand, one of the largest cities of the empire. Beyond Sogdiana, between the Tamerlan’s Gates and the Syr-darya/Iaxartes frontier, the Scythian satrapies (Saka Tigraxauda and Haumavarga) acted from the Aral to the Pamirs as an intermediary over the trans-Asiatic steppic belt (the Massagetes cannot be clearly located, however).

The deserts and the mountain ranges did not constitute any barrier for international contact. Several passes across the Hindukush connected the Oxus basin with the Indian world through the crossroads of Kapisa/Begram (future Alexandria on the Caucasus). Among the passes that crossed the Hissar and Alai ranges to the north, the Sogdian Iron Gates near Derbent (Rapin 2018) were the easiest way between Bactra and Maracanda/Samarkand.

The data relating to the occupation of the territory and its economic and administrative organization rely mainly on surveys and excavations (Koshelenko 1985; Francfort 2005; Lo Muzio 2017). Particular attention has been devoted to the irrigation development from the Bronze Age in Afghanistan (see the French researches in northeastern Afghanistan) and in the Central Asian republics (Francfort and Lecomte 2002). Besides the agricultural and pastoral economy, the region was inserted in the international system of exchanges thanks to its precious mineral deposits (see, for instance, the decoration of the palace of Darius at Susa or the luxurious tableware made of stones of eastern origin). In fact, the local excavations have provided rare testimonies of luxurious productions since the jewelry used mainly gold (see *infra* the treasures of the Oxus, of Mir-Zakah 2, and of Takht-i Sangin). The Achaemenid commercial exchanges seem to have been rather limited. To the north, along the lower Syr-darya, in Kazakhstan and Russia, precious merchandises dating to the very end of the Achaemenid or the beginning of the Hellenistic period are concentrated in the aristocratic burials of the upper classes of the nomad population shattered from the Ural to Altai and Siberia (see Francfort 2005, 2013). Even at the end of the Achaemenid period, the scarcity of coin finds to the north of the Hindukush shows that, in contrast to the Indian world, these regions were less monetarized, a situation which lasted until the Hellenistic period.

Chronological Frame

The Central Asian components of the Achaemenid Empire appear as a heterogeneous synthesis of cultural, social, economic, and political trends. The unity of the region as a part of this empire is more difficult to identify since the real marks of the Persian civilization symbolized by Persepolitan features are scarcely distributed in the archeological material. However, the cohesion is real. Beyond its Iranian roots, the Central Asian area has mainly inherited its

cultural frame from a long process which can be stressed in three cultural steps: the first, formed during the Bronze Age, is represented by the so-called “Oxus Civilization” or “Bactriana-Margiana Archaeological Complex” (BMAC), which interacted during the second millennium BCE with the “steppic” Andronovo culture. Into the same geographical frame, this period was succeeded during the second half of the second millennium BCE by a first step of the Iron Age characterized by a process of renewal of the architecture, the funeral customs, and the material culture. This new “entity” is known, among others, under the general name of “Yaz I” culture, according to the chronological scale established on the base of the excavation of the homonymous site of Yaz-depe in Turkmenistan. This period is characterized by the distribution of a handmade pottery with a painted geometric decoration and some gray ware. Whilst the large palaces and sanctuaries proper to the Bronze Age are absent at the beginning of the Iron Age, several settlements are erected on platforms or natural terraces.

Before the arrival of the Achaemenids, the so-called “Yaz II” period (c. ninth to sixth centuries BCE) is marked by an increase in wheel-made pottery and the diffusion of real iron objects. This period is more than transitional, since it is documented with new fortified centers dominated by monumental architecture (Ulug-depe I, Koktepe II, and Sangir-tepe II, etc.; dating is not sure for El’ken-depe III, Talashkan I). While irrigation generally developed from the Bronze Age onward, it is not clear to what extent some centers such as in Zeravshan then related to the ancient irrigation programs identified through the surveys.

As for the preceding periods, the few historical facts relating to the Achaemenid rule (“Yaz III” period) do not coincide with a visible transformation dated by direct Achaemenid cultural features. The strength of the regional traditions is represented, for instance, by the continuation of wheel-made cylindro-conical pottery, while the shapes linked to proper Persia are limited to very scarce vessels (Lyonnet 1997). The integration in the Achaemenid Empire was realized mainly through the local nobility.

Besides the fact that it must extend to other regions inside and outside of the empire, the study of this period cannot ignore the influences the Achaemenid presence exercised in the later historical phases among its Parthian, Graeco-Bactrian, and Chorasmian successors, as well as during the still later Kushan and Sogdian periods.

Written Sources of the Achaemenid Period

The texts relating to the Central Asian provinces are rather scarce and fragmentary. The most ancient references in the Iranian context are given by the *Avesta*, according to which eastern Bactria was the cradle of the Zoroastrianism

(*infra*). For the Achaemenid period, most of the sources belong mainly to the corpus of propagandistic and administrative documents from the heart of the empire. The local perspective is represented only by a group of recently discovered administrative Bactrian parchments of the fourth century BCE (Naveh and Shaked 2012). Among the Greek sources, the reports relating to pre-Achaemenid Bactria by Ctesias and Xenophon are controversial, while Herodotus knew little more than the earlier geographer Hecataeus. Similarly, the historicity of the presence in Bactria and Sogdiana of Mediterranean communities like the Barceans cited by Herodotus (4.204), or the Branchidae by Curtius Rufus (7.5.28–35), cannot be confirmed by any archeological site. Besides rare non-dated “Persian” short inscriptions (Kandahar and Ai Khanum), most of the texts related to the Achaemenid presence belong to the later Aramaic tradition (inscriptions of Ashoka and later evidences from Bactria, Parthia, Margiana, and Chorasmia). The administration illustrated by the Graeco-Bactrian inscriptions of Ai Khanum and Graeco-Bactrian parchments recently discovered to the north of the Hindukush must be partly considered as the Hellenistic heir of the Achaemenid financial and fiscal system. The glyptics, however, is practically not represented (Francfort 2013).

From a literary point of view, the analysis of the Achaemenid past of the region relies mainly on the Graeco-Roman sources relating to Alexander and his successors (Briant 2020; Rapin 2018).

Cities and Archeological Settlements

The field studies are rather scarce for fixing the precise hierarchy, nature, and evolution of the archeological sites (Figure 23.1). Besides the capitals of the satrapies, the territory comprised several large cities, probably at the head of the hyparchies, as well as regional castles, not to mention the villages or isolated settlements.

The capitals mentioned by the classical texts have been only partly excavated: Gorgan (in Hyrcania; Zadracarta was Sari in Tapuria), Merv (Erk-kala, founded during the early Iron Age, later named Antiochia of Margiana, while Alexandria of Margiana was possibly more to the south in the region of Kushka), Herat (Artacoana/Alexandria in Aria), Begram (Kapisa in Paropamisadae), Balkh (Bactra in Bactria), Samarkand-Afrasiab (Maracanda or Zariaspa in Sogdiana), and Nur-tepe near Kurkat (Cyropolis or Cyreschata in Scythia-Ustrushana, between Zaamin/Alexandria Eskhate? and Khojent/Antiochia Scythica). The capital of Oxiana (near which Alexander probably founded his Alexandria Oxiane) was somewhere in the center of the Sherabad-darya district, not far from Sherabad, Talashkan-tepe, or Jandavlat-tepe (Rapin 2018).

Though their status is not precisely established, several large cities centered on the main oases, on crossroads and strategical positions, were probably the



Figure 23.1 Map of the eastern part of Central Asia at the moment of the fall of the Achaemenid Empire and route of Alexander the Great in 330–327 BCE according to the most recent researches.

heads of the Achaemenid hyparchies. Besides Bactra, the south of the Oxus was controlled by cities such as Altyn Dilyar, Cheshme-Shafa (*infra*), and Kohna Qala ("Ville ronde") near Ai Khanum (*Oskobara/Eucratidia) along the "Ochus" river/Darya-i Panj. Mentioned by the Bactrian parchments and the classical sources, Khulm/Tashkurgane (Khulmi), Qunduz (Varnu/Aornos), Drapsaka in the region of Surkh-kotal, and Hulbuk (Cholbisina) have still to be explored. In Sogdiana, two cities controlled the Kashka-darya valley: Kiš/Nautaca near Shahr-i Sabz (sites of Uzunkyr, Padayatak-tepe, and Sangir-tepe)

and Nikhšapaya/Xenippa near Karshi (site of Erkurgan). Other cities are represented by Koktepe (probably ancient Gava and Gabai, capital of Sogdiana until Cyrus), Kyzyl-tepe (Gazaba? in Paretacene), Bandykhan, etc. North-west of Termez (later Antiochia Tharmata), sites like Shor-tepe (Tarmantis?) near Kampyr-tepe (later Pandokheion) controlled the principal ford on the Oxus. The situation of Chorasmia differs since its Achaemenid sites developed later.

A Sogdian City from the Iron Age to the Hellenistic Period

The reconstitution of the political, social, and economic institutions relies on rare excavated sites (Figure 23.2). The study is mainly limited to military features represented by a citadel and large lines of fortifications (Afrasiab,

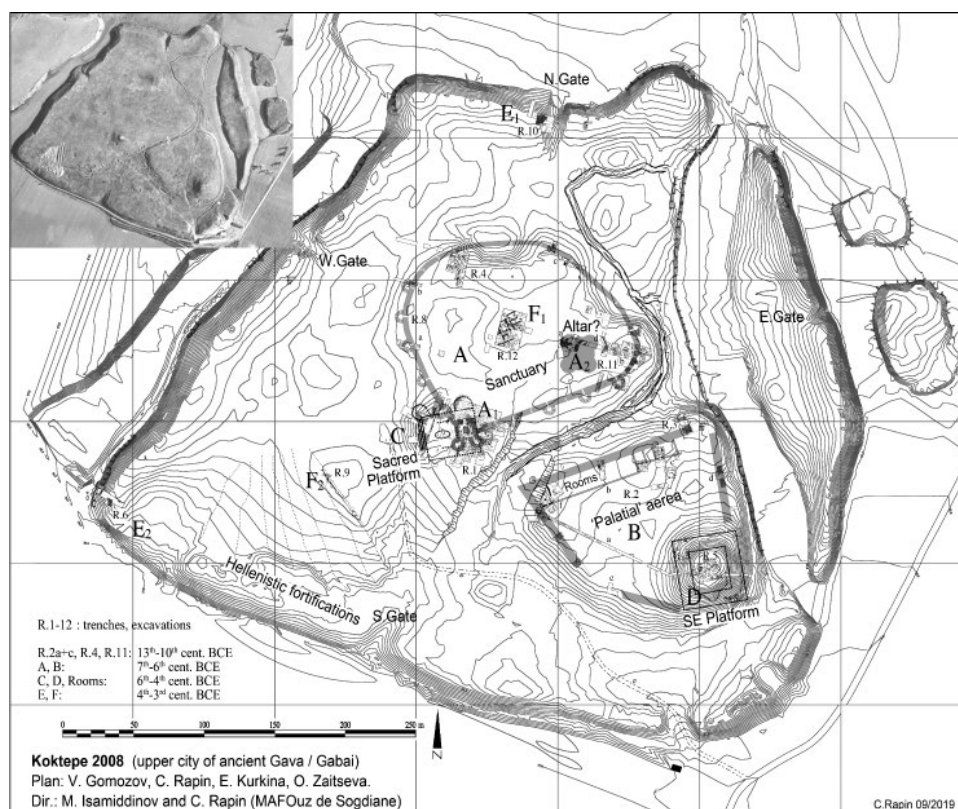


Figure 23.2 General plan of Koktepe/Gava (Sogdiana). *Koktepe II* (last pre-Achaemenid period): A and B) large monuments (A: sanctuary; A2: altar?). *Koktepe III* (Achaemenid period): C: central sacred platform; D: southeastern platform. *Koktepe IV* (early Hellenistic period); E: fortification; F: barracks.

Erkurgan, Uzunkyr, Koktepe, etc.), which not only englobed the proper monumental quarters but in times of danger had to shelter also the population of the region and the herds (these sites must be distinguished from the temporary fortresses or “rocks” occupied by the last Achaemenid Sogdian governors who opposed Alexander near the Iron Gates: Rapin 2018). The later Hellenistic cities like Ai Khanum reflected the same urban guidelines.

Mirroring the best explored Achaemenid cities to the south of the Oxus (Altyn 10 in Bactria with its close parallel of Dahan-i Ghulaman in Seistan), the site of Koktepe provides an example of long-term urban development of the northern areas, in both agricultural and nomadic contexts (Rapin and Isamiddinov 2013).

Since the artifacts do not usually provide easy benchmarks in absolute chronology, the analysis relies on the stratigraphy, mainly on the changes which affected monumental architecture of fortifications, palaces, and sanctuaries during the successive political transitions. Established on a natural plateau near the Bulungur canal to the north of Samarkand, the earliest urban settlement of Koktepe appeared in the Yaz I agricultural context. It is not clear whether the city was fortified like the similar sites of Chust and Dalverzin-tepe in Ferghana, but its regional importance was enhanced by the presence of apparently “official” monuments and a dense habitat. After it was abandoned, the site was devoted to pastoral activities for a couple of centuries.

Before the Achaemenids, Koktepe (Koktepe II period) appears as the major settlement of the Zeravshan, probably under the name of Gava, one of the cities mentioned in the early Avestan geography. Two large fortified courtyards appear on the plateau, one of religious function and the other, later complemented by a row of large rooms, grouping probably political, administrative, and economic functions. These buildings sheltered the primitive institutions of a “proto-urban” organization in the context of a regional power which probably emanated from the sedentarization of the Scythians and evolved into a first stage of the Sogdian state. A thick fortification several kilometers long around the plateau must probably be attributed to this period (rather than to the Achaemenids who later, probably under Darius I, fortified Afrasiab itself on a length of more than 5.5 km). It is not excluded that the other oases followed a parallel process, for instance in the Kashka-darya (ancient Kiš) and along the Kopet Dagħ (fortification program of El’ken-depe III, “Median” architecture of Ulug-depe I: Lecomte 2013).

From an archeological point of view, the transition toward the Achaemenids is rarely attested. Some sites are then abandoned (for example, Ulug-depe). At Koktepe the transition occurred apparently through a drastic change of architectural patterns marked by the erection of two platform buildings, the southeastern one having been built a little later than the central one (Koktepe III architectural phase). This renewal of the symbols of authority coincides

probably with the takeover of the region by Cyrus and Darius I. At the end of the Achaemenid period, however, Koktepe was no more than a regional fortress (known by the historian Arrian under the name of Gabae), while Afrasiab-Maracanda had reached the primacy between Zeravshan (the ancient Zariaspes/Polytimetus) and the Dargom canal (Dargomanes of Claudius Ptolemy).

The life of the main cities was partially interrupted during the first decades of the Macedonian power. Afrasiab and Koktepe are among the rare sites which present continuity as regards the location between the Achaemenid and Hellenistic periods, since several cities were rebuilt on adjacent sites during the Seleucid era.

Palaces

By its architecture, Koktepe represents one of the models of the proto-urban development of the Central Asian cities. In contrast to the domestic architecture, the large monuments can be dated more easily since their construction can be linked to the historical transitions during which new authorities – like either the central Achaemenid power or the local satraps and hyparchs – intended to settle their power by launching new architectural programs.

Although it is difficult to seize links with the West, the Achaemenids do not seem to have imposed a strong cultural unity. Some architectural features of the independent quadrangular buildings formed around open courtyards evidenced at Altyn 10 and Dahan-i Ghulaman seem to derive from traditions of the heart of empire (Persepolis, Pasargadae), but important monuments like the ones of Koktepe derive perhaps from a local or nomadic tradition. With the exception of some corridors, the satrapal palace on the citadel of Afrasiab (where Alexander murdered Clitus in 328 BCE) has not been explored enough for the identification of its main lines.

The origin of the schemes can be defined through the study of the much later Parthian royal complex of Old Nisa and Ai Khanum, two cities reflecting Greek, Bactrian, and Iranian (more than Mesopotamian) trends. While they are not systematically parallel to the general orientation of the sites, the buildings of both cities are structured by a network of corridors which allows us to distinguish private from public circulation areas, ensuring the movements around or between the units representing the various functions (residential, political, administrative, economic). Although they evoke a Mesopotamian tradition (see the Nebuchadnezzar palace of Babylon and the Darius palace at Susa), the corridors seem to have been already present in the local tradition from the beginning of the Achaemenid period. Other schemes like the quadrangular buildings organized around a courtyard (see above) originated in the

common – western and eastern – Iranian world. The structures comprising a central unit encircled by corridors and rows of rooms with an axial pronaos or a porch constitute a rather widespread scheme at Old Nisa and in Hellenistic and Kushan Bactria. In the western Iranian world some residences like the Ayadana of Susa are often unduly identified as temples for the confusing analogies with the “ateshgah” scheme of the much later Parthian and Sasanian periods.

In the northern periphery of the empire (Chorasmia and lower Syr-darya), the Achaemenid trends developed much later, from the fourth or third century BCE, under the form of large fortified settlements and cities (Koj-Krylgan-kala, Kalaly-gyr 1 and 2, Kjuzeli-gyr, Kazakl'i-yatkan/Akchakhan-kala, Babish-Mullah) (Minardi 2015).

The Platforms

The platforms supporting open or covered constructions cannot be grouped into a clear typology, especially as it is difficult to assess a possible western influence. Several examples reflect a clearly local origin since their foundation often goes back to the early Iron Age. The largest platforms – more than 15 ha – had the status of regional cities (Altyn-Dilyar-Tepe, plateau of Koktepe in Sogdiana), while the smaller ones corresponded to regional fortresses like Tillya-tepe in Bactria. The fortress of Kuchuk-tepe assumed possibly a religious function during the Achaemenid period (Francfort 2005).

Religious Life

Contrasting with the Bronze Age, at the end of the second millennium a fundamental change occurred in religious life with the abandonment of the burial practices by the sedentary societies. While the inhumation survived in the steppic societies (to the point that the study of their cultures relies almost entirely on their necropoles) and is represented by various mausoleums in the peripheral Chorasmia, the sedentary populations of Central Asia were devoted to new funerary rituals materialized by the absence of human remains, the corpses being exposed to open sky for emaciation. These changes coincide with the emergence of the Mazdaean and Zoroastrian religion during the early Iron Age.

Among the most ancient parts of the *Avesta*, the first chapter of the *Vendidad*, composed not long before the Achaemenids, refers to a geography whose scheme radiates in Central Asia across a territory which coincides with the area covered by the “Oxus” cultures of Yaz I and II. The center into which

this geography converges is not political but religious, since it corresponds to the place of the Illumination of Zoroaster, in northeastern Afghanistan (Grenet 2005). Therefore, at the arrival of the Achaemenids the Central Asian area is already inserted into the heart of a large common religious sphere.

The religious architecture is concentrated on a rather small corpus of sanctuaries and temples, whose identification and dating are often doubtful. One of the older performances of a fire cult has been evidenced at Koktepe/Gava in a pre-Achaemenid courtyard monument (period II), possibly in connection with an only partially excavated platform (Figure 23.2 A and P).

The Achaemenids did not impose a centralized religion, as the presence of varied types of monuments illustrates. According to Herodotus I, 131–132, and Strabo XV, 3, the most ancient rituals were practiced in the open air. This statement could correspond to sacred platforms whose tradition goes back to the Bronze Age (Nad-i Ali in Seistan) before a renewal at a more modest level during the Iron Age in the northeastern regions (Erk-kala in Margiana, and Koktepe, Sangir-tepe, Pachmak-tepe, and Pshak-tepe in Sogdiana). This architectural tradition lasted beyond the Achaemenids, as evidenced by the Hellenistic sacred platform and the stepped podiums on which stand the two main temples of Ai Khanum.

The existence of complex altars devoted to open-air rituals in courtyard sanctuaries like at Dahan-i Ghulaman is however not proved to the north of the Hindukush, although such a structure is not excluded for the unexcavated sanctuary of Cheshme-Shafa to the south of Bactra. In Chorasmia, the worship in the open air seems to have occurred in two circular sanctuaries (Kalalygyr 2 and Gjaur-kala 3). More to the east, it is not clear in what measure the Saka Haumavarga (in Ustrushana?) associated Zoroastrianism to their nomadic kurgan funeral practices.

It is usually considered that the covered temples (intended to house cult statues) appeared rather late in the Achaemenid period, perhaps even during the Seleucid period. Recent discoveries reveal, however, that in Central Asia both open-air and covered architectural types broadly coexisted already from the early decades of the Achaemenid rule. A covered temple at Sangir-tepe (period III, earlier phase) seems indeed to coexist with the sacred platform in Koktepe (period III: Figure 23.2C). The temple of Sangir-tepe was later replaced by a platform, whilst in the Surkhan-darya other covered temples were erected during the fourth century BCE (Kuchuk-tepe(?) and Kindyk-tepe near Bandykhan). It is not excluded that the Oxus treasure (*infra*) belonged to a similar temple.

The Graeco-Bactrian covered temples comprise a cella surrounded by sacristies and preceded by a porch or a pronaos. Since it appears rather late in Persia (see the Seleucid Frataraka temple at Persepolis), this scheme could derive from local early Achaemenid buildings (see Sangir-tepe in Sogdiana). It

is therefore not clear whether the ancient Mesopotamian area (see the sanctuary of Anu-Antum of the Bit-resh at Uruk) played a role in its development. A significant difference must be noted between the Mesopotamian and the Iranian worlds, since in the first case the lateral sacristies open on the pronaos (Bard-e Neshandeh and Masjid-e Solaiman), while in Central Asia they communicated directly with the cella. In this context, it means that the sacred treasure belonged somehow exclusively to the divinity.

While during the first centuries they were aniconic and addressed to the natural elements like fire and water, the Central Asian Zoroastrian cults progressed into an iconic polytheism which later differed from the proper Parthian and Sasanian aniconic cults of fire.

The scarce traces left by the earlier rituals are usually compatible with Zoroastrian features. Some of them correspond to rituals performed during the foundation of the sanctuaries (Koktepe and Sangir-tepe), while others evidence a worship centered on the natural elements (Sangir-tepe and Kindyk-tepe). The oldest iconic representations are known through the treasures of Mir-Zakah 2, of the Oxus, and of Takht-i Sangin. These treasures include Achaemenid, Hellenistic, and nomadic pieces of art such as statuettes, vases, bracelets, necklaces, rings, gems, votive plaques depicting Zoroastrian priests, donors, and animals dedicated to a temple and coins. The original context or dating of the Oxus treasure are the source of conflicting interpretations, but it can be considered that these objects were part of votive deposits sheltered in a monument which was replaced by the temple of Takht-i Sangin during the Graeco-Bactrian period.

Under the Graeco-Bactrian rule the Central Asian cults present a polytheist form whose divinities are iconographically Hellenized (Takht-i Sangin, Ai Khanum), while the sanctuaries are closely connected to the Achaemenid period through the artifacts of their sacred treasures. The Oxus river divinity was worshiped in Takht-i Sangin before the transformation of part of the temple in a "fire-temple" of Parthian-Sasanian tradition. The main divinity worshiped in Ai Khanum, in the temple with indented niches, at a distance of 100km from the Oxus, seems to have been rather a Zeus-Mithra or Zeus-Belos (hypothesis of Frantz Grenet). The common ground is enhanced by the discovery at Ai Khanum and Takht-i Sangin of two identical plaques illustrating Cybele associated to a ritual on a stepped altar raised on rocky ground which evokes also the traditional rituals on stepped platforms.

In conclusion, it appears that the intrusion of the Achaemenid power had no fundamental effects on Central Asian cultural life. Part of the transformations observed during this period results from a local evolution which began during the formative period of the Iron Age and continued long after the collapse of the empire. In this general context, marked by a slow evolution of cultural traditions, the appearance of innovative elements in pottery does not

immediately follow political changes. The objects related to the royal administration and to the aulic Persian art are limited to the treasuries, but the main impact of the real power of the Achaemenians can be identified through the best dated examples of monumental architecture, that is the palaces and sanctuaries.

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CHAPTER 24

The Empire's Southeast

Rémy Boucharlat

Today, the southeast of the empire covers the entire southeast of Iran (the provinces Kerman, Sistan-Baluchistan, and Hormuzgan), the south of Afghanistan (the provinces of Kandahar and Nimruz), the western part of Pakistan until the river Indus (Baluchistan and Sind, and its northern region, ancient Gandhāra), and, very likely, part of the Arab shore of the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea (the United Arab Emirates, the Sultanate of Oman).

In the Achaemenid period these are the satrapies from west to east: Carmania, Drangiana, and south of the latter Makā, moreover Arachosia, India, Sattagydia, and to the north Gandhāra. But not even the borders between Fars and neighboring Carmania (Kerman) have been ascertained, due to the scarcity of information we have on the historical geography of this part of the empire. To define specific cultural horizons of each region is difficult due to the dearth of known archeological sites (Vogelsang 1992).

When looking for settlements of the Achaemenid period, the archeological research has to concentrate along ancient roads, known from Alexander's itinerary as reported by Classical authors, and in the rich valleys. Among the natural resources of that region, the Achaemenid royal inscriptions in Susa mention *yakā* wood from Gandhāra and ivory from India. A special green stone, chert, from Arachosia, was used for making series of mortars and pestles found in the Persepolis Treasury (Bowman 1970). The corresponding quarries have not been located yet.

Initial archeological exploration is sporadic; it begins seriously with the reconnaissances of intrepid Sir Aurel Stein in Gedrosia in 1927, then, in 1932,

in Kerman down to Bandar Abbas (Stein 1931, 1937). Although he is mainly interested in prehistoric periods, he is careful to take down the late prehistoric sites that lie on his way (first millennium BCE) as well as later ones. From the great British explorations in the Indus valley and Gandhāra, information with regard to settlement in the Achaemenid epoch is sporadic. As a result, our information on the Achaemenid southeast derives from the exploration of just a few sites, barely one per region, in northern Pakistan (Akra, Charsadda, Taxila), Afghanistan (Kandahar), and Iran (Dahaneh-i Ghulaman, Tepe Yahya, Bam, Qaleh Kutчек). This meager state of knowledge and difficulties in interpreting the results of the surveys have so far prevented a precise periodization. A map of the population and of human activities in those regions remains to be designed.

Deviant from most Near Eastern regions which were populated – almost without interruption – from the Bronze Age to the Achaemenid period, the eastern half of Iran and the south of Afghanistan seem to have been unoccupied in the second millennium BCE until the beginning of the first millennium (Azarnoush and Helwing 2005: Map 4); this gap is real, but it is also a reflection of the paucity of research. The situation is not much different in the southern Indus valley, where this period has been described as a “Dark Age” (Franke-Vogt 2001). The resettlement is no by-product of the Achaemenid Empire; actually, it begins before, starting in the first half of the first millennium BCE in Iron Age II or III.¹ According to a hypothesis which gains more and more approval, this fresh start was set in motion by a new irrigation technique using subterranean galleries, instead of capturing episodic run-off and tapping springs in use since millennia. This dramatic change of technique, a response to the increasing desiccation of the climate, is well attested on the Arab shore of the Persian Gulf at about the same time, and certainly before the Achaemenid epoch (Potts 1990: pp. 391–392, 2004: pp. 78–79; Magee 2005; Wilkinson et al. 2012: pp. 167–169). A gallery like this did not lie very deep, thereby in my opinion differing from the famous *qanāt*, which taps a deep-lying aquifer, probably a later technique (Boucharlat 2001, 2017).

To the east of the imperial centers in Fars, three sites dated to the Achaemenid epoch are at present known in Carmania. At Qaleh Kutчек in the Halil valley, 18 km southwest of Jiroft, resettlement starts in the Iron Age and expands in the Achaemenid epoch, when it shows an urban organization with a citadel of more than 2 ha in its center, surrounded by an Inner and an Outer Town (Azadi et al. 2012). The site has been surveyed but not excavated yet. Southwest of Qaleh Kutчек, the high hill of Tepe Yahya, abandoned sometime in the second millennium BCE, was occupied again in the Iron Age (Level III, 800–600 BCE). A mudbrick platform that was rebuilt once follows. Its dimensions have not been ascertained as they surpass the limits of the sounding. Radiocarbon datings put both platforms between 650 and 500

BCE, that is, before and at the beginning of the Achaemenid epoch. They are seen as the work of a local authority which, according to the excavators, disappeared when Darius consolidated his power (Lamberg-Karlovsky and Magee 1999). Contemporary and later structures of Level II dated from 500 to 250 BCE consist of modest multiroom mudbrick and stone buildings (Magee 2004: pp. 73–75). Further to the east, around Bam, following upon the terrible earthquake in 2003, an intensive exploration of the region under reconstruction by Iranian archeologists brought to light several pre-Islamic settlements; an Achaemenid fort of about 400 m² and habitations have been identified. Here, too, the use of subterranean galleries, some of which seem to belong to that period, may explain the reoccupation of the region after a long hiatus (Adle 2006: pp. 43–47).

Along the Arabian Sea, east of the Strait of Hormuz, in the inhospitable region of coastal Baluchistan, the first millennium BCE sites consist often of large fields of cairn-burials, which were certainly used in the Parthian epoch, as is attested by the coins, but perhaps also earlier (Stein 1937). Not a single town of that period has been located (Franke-Vogt 2001: p. 270). This coast poses the problem of Makā, which has long been associated with the modern name of Makran. Today the satrapy named Makā is thought to have extended mainly to the other side of the sea into the Oman Peninsula (Potts 1990: pp. 393–400). There is, admittedly, no indication, for instance in the shape of Achaemenid-inspired objects and pottery, that the region belonged to the empire, but interestingly some pottery classes from the region are paralleled with Tepe Yahya (Magee 2004), one more argument for continuation of the traditional cultural relationships between the two sides of the Gulf also in that epoch.

The only candidate for the capital of Drangiana, Zarin according to Ctesias, is Dahaneh-i Ghulaman, near Lake Hamun at the border of Afghanistan and Pakistan. This exceptional Achaemenid site was founded and occupied at that period, but soon abandoned, probably due to the change of the Hilmand river bed. Of about 30 buildings discovered in the 1960s (Scerrato 1966; Genito 2012) and a dozen more in the past decade, five are large square structures with an ample central court. In QN16, measuring 53 m each side, the courtyard is surrounded by a corridor divided into a series of long rooms on the four sides. QN15 with a series of parallel narrow rooms on the sides is very close to the “Winter Palace” of Altyn 10 in far distant Bactria, dating from the Achaemenid period but deriving from a Bronze Age tradition (Sarianidi 1977: figs. 46 and 48). Besides the ovens and platforms found in several rooms, this building contained remains of wall paintings depicting a camel, horses, and an archer driving a chariot (Sajjadi 2007). QN2 with the courtyard divided into two parts by a series of long rooms can be compared to the square “Summer Palace” of Altyn 10 (Sarianidi 1977: fig. 45). This architecture is clearly linked

to Central Asian traditions, which are very different from the royal architecture in Achaemenid Fars. The most famous of those buildings, QN3, 53.20×54.30 m, consists of four porticoes with two rows of six mudbrick pillars, between four blocks in the corners. Due to numerous fireplaces in the porticoes and to its large courtyard with three rectangular platforms in the middle, the edifice has often been interpreted as a cultic monument, but there is no agreement as to the religion it served: whether Zoroastrian or pre-Zoroastrian (Gnoli 1993). The functions of the buildings mentioned are still to be understood. All those buildings, as well as clusters of multiroom houses between them, are built on either side of an artificial main canal and along a secondary branch. Apart from this main part of the site, there is another building with a completely different plan: in the middle of an enclosure of 190 m², the building measuring 50×55 m consists of a rectangular central space (courtyard or large room?) flanked by four corner rooms; the general layout recalls the type of the Pasargadae palaces (Mohammadkhani 2012).

Dahaneh-i Ghulaman is completely built of mudbricks of 33 cm side length, as known from Persepolis and Susa, or 50×50 cm; baked bricks appear rarely, stone is totally missing. The multiyear excavations and recent surveys have provided a valuable corpus of pottery which is a reference (Genito 1990). The time-limited activity at this major but isolated site and the lack of regional settlements around it which have sustained the city (according to recent careful surveys) remain a challenge for understanding the functioning of this satrapical center set in a harsh environment.

In Old Kandahar, the capital of Arachosia, the British excavations of 1974–1978 were interrupted by the wars in Afghanistan but carefully published (McNicol and Ball 1996; Helms 1997; summary Ball 2019: s.v. Kandahar). On this huge site, two of the soundings 600 m afar show that the rampart (“casemate curtain”) with a moat protected a vast surface in the Achaemenid period. Other trenches at different places inside the site brought to light thick *pakhsa* (pisé) walls and a platform belonging to a citadel testifying the extension of the Achaemenid occupation. The foundation of the city of Kandahar and its fortification are clearly dated to the Achaemenid period but follow earlier occupation periods. The discovery of fragments of two Elamite-Persepolitan-type tablets inside the fortification confirms the integration of the region into the empire (Fisher and Stolper 2015). The study of the pottery, which includes carinated bowls, has made it possible to assign to that same epoch some other sites in Pakistan (Franke-Vogt 2001; Magee and Petrie 2010).²

In the regions on the western shore of the southern Indus valley, excavations or surveys have been more intense than in the arid regions of the southeast; occupation in the first millennium BCE is well attested, including the Achaemenid epoch, but while cultural changes toward 600–500 BCE can be shown up, it is difficult to distinguish the Achaemenid period from following

periods because of the continued presence of the shapes of the hallmark artifacts of this vast region, such as the S-carinated bowls and the deeper “tulip bowls” appearing c. 400 BCE here as well as in several Iranian regions, from where they originate (Franke-Vogt 2001: pp. 258–260). That difficulty is also apparent by their presence further north, in Gandhāra, on Taxila and Charsadda (Marshall 1951; Wheeler 1962), major sites of the Hellenistic period and the centuries following. On these sites the Achaemenid occupation is still under discussion, but an Achaemenid settlement on the Bhir Mound of Charsadda is very likely (Magee and Petrie 2010: pp. 514–515), and it is not the first on that site. At both sites, tulip bowls probably date from the late Achaemenid or post-Achaemenid period. The same can be said of the so-called Graeco-Persian seals; very few came from excavations (Bhir Mound). They might have been locally produced (Callieri 1997: pp. 235–237). The first evidence of coinage with (silver) bent bar “coins” at Charsadda is generally attributed to the very late fourth century BCE (Marshall 1951: Pl. 234). To the southwest the excavations at Akra in the Bannu Basin in 1995–2000 brought to light evidence of an Iron Age settlement extending over more than 30 ha. On Area B, a series of soundings evidences an Achaemenid occupation with pottery, including the distinctive tulip bowls, which can be compared to sixth to fourth century BCE assemblages from Iran and Afghanistan. Because of the size of the site and on the ground of epigraphic and historical data, the excavators suggest Akra was the capital of Thatagush (Magee et al. 2005; Magee and Petrie 2010).

NOTES

- 1 Dahaneh-i Ghulaman in Sistan is a remarkable exception. See below.
- 2 On the other hand, Iron Age III installations, such as Pirak Level III in Pakistani Baluchistan and Nad-i Ali, in southwestern Afghanistan (near Dahaneh-i Ghulaman), are supposedly abandoned in the Achaemenid epoch (Franke-Vogt 2001).

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SECTION IV

HISTORY

SECTION IV.A

**PREDECESSORS
OF THE PERSIAN
EMPIRE AND ITS RISE**

CHAPTER 25

The Median Dilemma

Robert Rollinger

It is no easy feat to correctly ascertain the role of the Medes in the historical and political development of the Ancient Near East. This is mostly due to two distinct problems, the first being a disparate and heterogeneous source tradition. Just as importantly, however, scholarly “tradition” has led to the calcification and entrenchment of certain ideas and preferences, as regards, for example, which source genres to use in trying to write Median history. At times, the salient issues are thus not grasped in their entirety or are ignored in favor of a narrative reconstruction of historical events allegedly based on a solid foundation in the sources. As recently as the late twentieth century, it was accepted historical knowledge that the fall of the Assyrian Empire was followed by the rise of a Median “empire” which ruled vast tracts of the Ancient Near East for half a century, until Astyages, the last Median ruler, was overthrown by one of his own vassals, namely Cyrus the Great. Only relatively late, the important works of the late Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg pointed out the many difficulties and inadequacies of this view (Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1988, 1995; see also Kienast 1999). Sancisi-Weerdenburg was particularly critical of the alleged “imperial” structure and character of Median rule and identified a number of striking dissimilarities with other imperial entities of the Ancient Near East. She also emphasized the almost complete dependency of modern historiography on Classical (i.e. Greek) sources, to the nearly complete disregard of Ancient Near Eastern sources. Unfortunately, Sancisi-Weerdenburg’s work was met with very little acceptance. On the contrary, her hypotheses and

conclusions were ignored, and the problematic nature of previous scholarship was marginalized.

An international symposium held in Padua in 2001 attempted to rigorously review all available sources and to present a secure (as far as possible) narrative of Median history (Lanfranchi et al. 2003). While the participants were largely successful in their first aim, no consensus on an accepted narrative could be reached due to the frustratingly incomplete and fragmentary nature of the sources. There was, however, a general consensus that the existence of a Median “empire” cannot be conclusively proven and should not be treated differently from other hypotheses. Opinions were divided on any further detailed characterization of historical events: whereas many of those present rigorously refused it or attempted to follow through on the theses of Sancisi-Weerdenburg by questioning the geographic extent of Median influence (Liverani 2003; Rollinger 2003a, b; Henkelman 2003; Jursa 2003), others still chose to accept the notion of a Median “empire” (Roaf 2003). The discussion has continued up to the present (Tuplin 2005; Lanfranchi 2021; Rollinger 2004, 2005, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2020a; Waters 2005). What follows is an attempt to tackle this “Median dilemma”¹ and to throw a more general light on the Medes and their “history,” the available sources, the problems, and what we can state with some certainty.

In the reign of the Neo-Assyrian king Shalmaneser III (858–834 BCE), Medes (Madāya) are mentioned for the first time. In the following centuries, they appear again and again in Neo-Assyrian sources, especially in royal inscriptions, but also in archival records, mainly as opponents encountered when the Assyrian armies campaign in the central Zagros area – where they are primarily localized – but also as vassals of the Neo-Assyrian super power (Radner 2003; Bagg 2020, pp. 379–382). Although it is unclear how far to the east the Assyrians reckoned with the presence of a Median population, there is evidence that it was as far as the region of the modern cities of Teheran and Rey (Rollinger 2007).

Not only for the Neo-Assyrian era of the ninth through seventh centuries BCE but also for the following Neo-Babylonian and early Persian times (sixth century BCE) our sources exclusively exhibit an external view of the Medes (Liverani 2003). There is not a single indigenous source representing a “Median” perspective on their matters, their history, or their agenda. Nor do we know whether there was a shared Median identity and whether the Medes of our sources called themselves Medes (Lanfranchi 2003: p. 84). Sometimes the Neo-Assyrian sources refer to “mighty Medes” and “distant Medes.” At least these qualifications look very much like projections from outside in order to organize the expanding knowledge of an area becoming increasingly well known by the Assyrians. Some of these “Medes” were localized inside the empire, some of them outside; this makes them, as seen through an Assyrian lens, a border population. The Medes within Assyrian reach were regarded as

vassals and had to swear the loyalty oath to the Assyrian heir apparent Esarhaddon (672 BCE).

The origin of the term *Madāya* is unknown, its specific trans-regional usage evidently derives from Assyrian practice. Like in antiquity the ethnic term “German,” picked up from a very local and indigenous usage and artificially spread over the entire population east of the Rhine river by Caesar himself, the Assyrians might have taken up a local designation somewhere in the central Zagros area and transferred it to a far larger population covering the whole of the central Zagros and farther to the east.

Although the most popular one, the designation *Madāya*/Medes was not the only one used for the population of the central Zagros area. In the second half of the eighth century BCE appears the designation “Arabs of the east” (Radner 2003: p. 55). We do not exactly know what this actually means but it seems to reveal some kind of uncertainty about how to label the peoples of the central Zagros regions. “Arab,” a term that also appears for the first time in world history in the inscriptions of Shalmaneser III, may, at least initially, represent not an ethnically or linguistically determined designation but one referring to a specific mode of living, where transhumance or trade with camels might have played a major role (Lanfranchi 2003).

In Neo-Babylonian and (retrospective) Persian sources the term *Ummān-manda* appears for the Medes (Adali 2011). The term clearly is a designation deriving from outside and has a pejorative connotation. Moreover, it is evident that the term *Madāya* and the Neo-Assyrian concept attached to it – i.e. a rather homogeneous and substantial population of the central Zagros area – became part of a tradition and was adapted by contemporary and later, adjacent and more distant languages and cultures, like the Urartians, Babylonians, Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans.

As we do not know whether these *Madāya* had a supra-regional Median identity, we are also ignorant about whether they represent a homogenous linguistic group. Although the many “Median” proper names that we have, thanks to the flourishing cuneiform and later especially Greek sources, reveal a dominant Iranian background of these people, one should be cautious about claiming that this evidence definitely proves a homogenous and well-defined Iranian language, generally and simplistically labeled “Median.” Such a hypothesis, although very common and likewise broadly accepted as fact, does not rest on firm ground (Schmitt 2003; Rossi 2010, 2017). It is highly probable that behind these proper names lurks a much larger and more complex diversity of local Iranian dialects/languages. And certainly, we have to reckon with a larger ethnic diversity in general in these areas where Urartian, Hurrian, Elamite, Assyrian, Babylonian, and other languages played a certain role (Fuchs 2011).

Over the 200 years of rather extensive Neo-Assyrian documentation there is not a single piece of evidence for a unified political entity in the central Zagros

region, let alone for a Median “empire.” Instead, these sources depict a highly fragmented political landscape in the Zagros mountain region, with no discernible tendencies toward greater centralization. The Assyrians encounter a plurality of small political units, whose rulers they call not “king” but “city lord” (*bēl āli*). Although transhumance was highly important in these regions, horse breeding and trade/robbery also played an important role, since the Khorasan road, i.e. the predecessor of the Silk Road, crossed the central Zagros area. In any case, the Assyrian sources never describe the Medes as nomads but always as a sedentary population. Intensive contact with the Assyrian super power and its gigantic economic space was highly influential in these regions, especially when with the reign of king Sargon (721–705 BCE) the Assyrians began to establish provinces. These contacts certainly transformed local societies and may also have triggered developments toward political unification that can be described as “secondary state formation” (Brown 1986; Rollinger 2020b), although this process never became a supra-regional phenomenon. This conclusion is confirmed by archeological sources that, likewise, do not indicate the existence of a unified Median state. Important sites like Nush-e Jan, Godin Tepe, Baba Jan Tepe, or Ozbaki Tepe do not represent “imperial centers” but rather **seats of “city lords” with no more than a local reach** (Liverani 2003; Stronach 2003; Gopnik 2011). Previously identified seats of power of an alleged Median “empire” in western Iran, like Hamadan, or outside the proper central Zagros area, like Kerkenes Dağı in Asia Minor, do not hold up to critical scrutiny and have been revealed as optimistic academic mirages, constructed to fit preconceived notions of imperial Media (Boucharlat 1998; Sarraf 2003; Rollinger 2003b).

By about the middle of the seventh century BCE Assyrian sources on the Medes become scanty. They reappear on the political stage when the Assyrian Empire fights a final struggle for existence in the last third of the seventh century BCE. Our main source for these events is a Babylonian chronicle, the so-called “Fall of Nineveh Chronicle” (Grayson 2000: pp. 90–96). Although the Chronicle reveals a Babylonian perspective on the events, it does not deny that it was not only the Babylonian forces under their usurper king Nabopolassar (626–605 BCE) that brought the Assyrian super power to an end but a coalition of Medes and Babylonians, who even concluded a formal treaty of alliance (Rollinger 2003a, 2010; Fuchs 2014). The Medes are described as Ummān-manda and led by a certain Umakištar (Cyaxares in Greek). Obviously they “descend” to Assyria but the origin and reach of Umakištar’s reign remain obscure. They destroy the city of Assur in 614 BCE and, together with the Babylonians, Nineveh in 612. With this event Umakištar disappears again from the historical scene, although some Medes may have participated in the Neo-Babylonian campaign to the last Neo-Assyrian residence Harran to deliver the failing Assyrians their final blow (Rollinger 2003a).

The Medes prominently reappear in the inscriptions of the last Neo-Babylonian king, Nabonidus (556–539 BCE) (Rollinger 2003a, 2010, 2020a). Three events focus on the Medes through a Babylonian lens. The first one is once more the city of Harran in Syria. Nabonidus claims that the Babylonians were unable to rebuild the temple Ehulhul of the moon god Šin, allegedly destroyed by Medes during the final struggles of the Neo-Assyrian Empire in 609 BCE, because the Medes were supposedly still “roaming around” for more than 50 years. This is clearly an ideologically biased view where an allegedly permanent Median presence in Syria during the first half of the sixth century BCE is made accountable for Babylonian inactivity to rebuild the temple. In the same way, the Medes are presented as archetypical temple destroyers, an uncoordinated and destructive mass of people, and thus as true barbarians. This also goes for the second event, when Nabonidus looks back on the fall of the Neo-Assyrian Empire and describes the Medes as a destructive flood that ruined not only Assyria but also Mesopotamian cultic rites and cult centers. The third event is contemporaneous to Nabonidus, when he focuses on the end of Median dominance in the central Zagros area. In this context another Median leader is introduced 60 years after Umakištar. His name is Ištumegu (Astyages in Greek). The event in question is also addressed by the so-called Nabonidus Chronicle originating in Persian times, although inscription and chronicle are not in accordance concerning the dating of the event (553 vs. 550 BCE). Ištumegu seems to have ruled a political entity of medium size around its center, Hagmatana (Agbatana or Ekbatana in Greek; Hamadan in modern times), which controlled a territory no larger than the central Zagros region. He is not presented as a relative of the former Umakištar, and his political and especially military instruments appear to have been much less developed than those of his predecessor. He is in control neither of northwestern nor of southwestern Iran. He is not characterized as suzerain and superior of the king of Anshan, i.e. later Cyrus the Great. Rather, it was the latter who took the initiative and campaigned against his northern neighbor and rival, whom he quickly overthrew, and plundered Hagmatana (Rollinger 1999, 2010, 2020).

With this event the Medes do not disappear from cuneiform sources. Media has a coda in Darius’ Bisitun inscription (Rollinger 2005). It figures as a kind of supra-regional entity reaching from eastern Anatolia to central western Iran and farther to the east, and as far as the southern Caspian Sea. At first glance, one may take this as evidence for the extension of a former Median “empire.” But a closer look reveals that this is still a politically fragmentary and heterogeneous area, where several individual uprisings with different usurpers took place, only one claiming to be a descendant of the already legendary Umakištar. This evidence is thus best explained as a reflection of the reach of a very short-termed confederation that owes its brief existence mainly to the special historical circumstances around the fall of the Neo-Assyrian Empire.

The persistence of local traditions in a politically still fragmented landscape in these areas during early Persian times is also demonstrated by a much-disputed passage of the so-called Nabonidus Chronicle (ii 16) (Rollinger 2009; Rollinger/Kellner 2019). The passage deals with a campaign of Cyrus the Great in 547 BCE (the ninth year of king Nabonidus) toward a land which cannot be defined with absolute certainty because the text is partly broken. Only traces of the country's first sign are preserved rather badly, and it has been argued for about 100 years how to read this sign (Rollinger 1993: pp. 188–197). The discussion is characterized by the fact that such readings/interpretations have nearly always been presented as a “fact,” the tablet's bad state of preservation and the many different readings put forward notwithstanding. From the very beginning there was a mainstream opinion that the first sign of the country has to be read as Lu-[xxx] and the country thus to be interpreted as Luddu, i.e. Lydia. This is the main reason for dating Cyrus' conquest of Lydia in 547 BCE. Divergent opinions concerning the reading of the sign have always been pushed aside, and this is also true in current discussions. In this context, astonishingly, it has been totally ignored that this discussion should not be based solely on the reading of the sign in question. Obviously the many differing opinions expressed on this problem in the last 100 years more than clearly demonstrate that the tablet's state of preservation is simply not sufficient to claim that the problem can be definitely solved by presenting this or that solution (cf. van der Spek 2014: pp. 256, n. 184; more cautiously: Payne and Wintjes 2016: p. 14 with n. 6). Rather, one has to contextualize the problem and look at the whole passage in question. There it is stated that

King Cyrus (II) of Parsu mustered his army and crossed the Tigris downstream from Arbēla (Erbil) and, in the month of Iyyar, [march]ed to X [???]. / He defeated its king (or: put its king to death), seized its possessions, [and] set up his own garrison [there]. After that, the king and his garrison resided there (Nabonidus Chronicle ii 15–18; Grayson 2000: p. 107).

The document's geographical perspective reveals an important dimension of argumentation, although this crucial point is generally nearly totally ignored, for the alleged statement that Cyrus crossed the Tigris and marched toward Lydia is very difficult to explain. According to Google Maps, the distance between Erbil and Sardis is 1739 km, calculating the shortest route through upper Mesopotamia crossing the Euphrates at Birecik and continuing via Gaziantep to the west. But, Cyrus could not have taken this short route, for most of the area was, at least at that time, controlled by the Babylonians (Jursa 2003; Rollinger 2003a). If the reading Lu-[???] is supposed to be correct, he must have taken a route via eastern Anatolia that was about 2000 km in length. This is slightly less than the distance between

Cologne and Moscow (about 2300 km). From this perspective, such an interpretation becomes hardly tenable. It is as if a nineteenth-century central European chronicle on Napoleon's campaign against the Tsar had described the event as follows: "The French emperor crossed the river Rhine below Cologne and marched against Moscow."² Lydia is therefore not really an option, whereas the reading Ú-[??] is still a very attractive one. But even if this reading cannot be proven definitively, it is clear that Cyrus marched against a still independent country in the immediate reach of a route along the Tigris, and a region in eastern Anatolia is a very good candidate. Thus the chronicle becomes an important testimony also for Median history, for it proves that Cyrus' conquest of Ekbatana did not mean that he was also in control of eastern Anatolia. Apparently, there still existed an important political entity in this area that was only conquered by Cyrus in 547 BCE. There is further indirect evidence for this.

We know that Darius I and Xerxes set up inscriptions not only in their favorite residences, like Persepolis and Susa, but also in residences of those former political entities that were conquered by Cyrus and in which the early Achaemenids presented themselves as true and legitimate successors of their Teispid predecessors (Rollinger 2015: pp. 118–120). This is true for Hamadan and Babylon, for example, but also for Van. The inscription placed at a steep rocky flank of the former Urartian capital was obviously tremendously important, for Xerxes explicitly mentions that his father Darius already intended its construction, but only he was able to achieve this. The inscription only makes sense, however, if the choice of the location commemorates the former capital of a substantial political entity that ended through Teispid conquest. Together with the evidence from the Nabonidus Chronicle, this means that in the first half of the sixth century BCE the Medes cannot have been in permanent control of eastern Anatolia. Their power was mainly limited to the central Zagros area.

This now brings the Classical sources into play, for there is, for example, Herodotus' testimony that during an eclipse generally dated to 585 BCE, the Medes and the Lydians met at the river Halys in central Anatolia to forge an alliance. Although many historians still treat Herodotus as sourcebook, simply used like a quarry to rephrase history, it is increasingly clear that he has to be dealt with as a literary work completed during the Peloponnesian War, presenting a view on the past, first and foremost, through a Greek lens of around 420 BCE. In his *Histories* he skillfully elaborates ancient Near Eastern history as a sequence of empires, where empire is modeled according to the Persian-Achaemenid empire of Herodotus' own time (Bichler 2000; Rollinger 2003c, 2014; Rollinger et al. 2011). This is also the guiding principle of Ctesias' work, which survived only in fragments, developing Herodotus' concept of a Median "empire" even further (Wiesehöfer et al. 2011; Waters 2017). It is Herodotus, and especially Ctesias, who formed the basis for later Classical

sources that structured world history as a sequence of empires – a view that was adopted by late antique Christianity and passed on through the Middle Ages to modern times (Wiesehöfer 2003, 2005). It is mainly this reception history that saved for the Medes a prominent place in a Western view of world history canonized over a lengthy period. Both Herodotus and Ctesias describe Median history as a succession of kings ruling a united and far-reaching territory from the beginning to the very end (Rollinger 2010, 2011, 2020a). Apart from the name of the last king, Astyages, however, they completely disagree about the number of these kings, their names, and the duration of the Median period. With indigenous ancient Near Eastern sources they share only two facts: it was the Medes who brought the Assyrian Empire to an end, and it was Cyrus who overcame Astyages. It was apparently the fall of the Assyrian Empire that directed historical attention toward the Medes, yet without much further information on what these Medes really were. Herodotus, moreover, reports a famous story about how the Medes established monarchy. But this story has been decoded as a mix of Iranian mythology and sophistic Greek theories of the end of the fifth century BCE on how states come into being (Panaino 2003; Meier et al. 2004; see also Gufler 2016, and Degen/Rollinger 2020). Whereas Ctesias' Medes control the entire Ancient Near East, those of Herodotus do not. Their reach extends as far west as the river Halys (Kızılırmak) where they allegedly share a border with the Lydians. This border looks very much like a Greek construction of the fifth century BCE to organize ancient Near Eastern history, however (Rollinger 2003a). And to prove such a construction it is connected with a legendary story. This is exactly the “historical” context for localizing the Median-Lydian treaty at the Halys river and for the famous story about the sage Thales, who predicted an eclipse of the sun that brought Median-Lydian strife to an end. The Medes might have been roaming through Anatolia for a very brief period of time, and they may indeed have concluded a treaty with the Lydians, but there was no permanent Median control of eastern – let alone central – Anatolia in the sixth century BCE.³

Finally, some additional evidence demonstrates that the claim for a Median “empire” lacks a solid basis.⁴ There are no archeological remains of imperial centers, nor are there documentary archives surviving from a supposed Median administration. Not a single document has come down to us from their supposed domain, since multiple documents previously thought to have done so have been shown to be untrustworthy. There is also no contemporary correspondence between foreign kings and Median rulers, neither from Babylonia nor from any other country. In the entire 3000-year history of the Ancient Near East, the Medes would thus have established the only “empire” from which no kind of textual documentation, neither from inside nor from outside, has survived to this day.

In addition to these negative findings, which result from careful reevaluation of existing evidence, the model of a geographically and chronologically limited political “confederation” dominated by Iranian peoples has been developed as an alternative to the notion of a Median “empire.” In the short term, this confederation likely played an important role in the immediate aftermath of the fall of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, though it was never to develop comparable imperial structures. Indeed, a prime motivation of the members of this “confederation” is said to have been raids reaching as far as central Anatolia. There was no organized “rule” as such, no stable authority, as the “confederation” was in itself a short-lived collective brought together by momentarily overlapping goals and ambitions. As such, it was more likely dominated by short-term alliances and dependencies which would scarcely have endured beyond the next raiding season. If any coherent order of rule developed at all, as this theory goes, it could only have happened in the central Zagros region between Lake Urmia and Elam. The loose, mixed structure of the short-termed Median confederation is also confirmed by the wording of the Nabonidus inscriptions, which carry clear connotations of disorder and chaos when dealing with the Medes. The Medes’ appearance is characterized as a great flood and their military organization is described as a loose confederacy with primitive hierarchies. Significantly, this confederation revolving around a charismatic leader is circumscribed by the formulation of “Kings who march at his side” (Rollinger 2003a: p. 318). Moreover, particular verses in the Book of Jeremiah paint a similar picture by describing Median kings (plural!) as part of a larger federation (Liverani 2003).

It should be pointed out that, in all honesty, these arguments are likewise more probabilities than conclusive proof. There is room for interpretation, in any case: one may or may not agree on the applicability of the “secondary state formation” model and its implications for the Zagros region. Likewise, one may find the terminology of the Nabonidus inscriptions too vague or too obviously following Neo-Babylonian preconceptions of Medes as “barbarians” to be helpful, or even doubt the historical value of biblical texts in general. The synonymy of “Medes” and “Persians” for Greeks could be explained in a different way: the relationship between Persians and Medes could still be conceived as one between vassals and overlords, and, finally, the new interpretation of Nabonidus Chronicle ii 16 could be challenged.

Still, taken together with negative evidence for a Median “empire,” the evidence presented in favor of a loose confederation of peoples does seem to comprise a sustainable basis for this hypothesis. It must, of course, remain a hypothesis, but one with a relatively coherent and dense line of argumentation that is more plausible than previous explanations.

NOTES

- 1 It is interesting to note that some recent and very prominent handbooks on Iranian history even appear reluctant to deal with the problem at all and do not include a chapter on the Medes: Daryaei (2012) and Potts (2013).
- 2 Additionally, one has to stress that the perception of space is not an absolute value – 2300 km was a much larger distance in Cyrus' times, when Lydia was perceived to be at the western fringes of the world.
- 3 The adoption of the term "Mede" as a general synonym for "Persian" in Greek sources, attested since the later sixth century BCE, can be seen as evidence of an ephemeral contact between Medes and Greeks in Asia Minor that originated in Median raids to central Anatolia.
- 4 The alleged intermediary role in transmitting Neo-Assyrian artistic traditions with political connotations subscribed to the Medes by modern scholars can be ascribed to Elam or to the Neo-Babylonian Empire (Seidl 1994; Liverani 2003; Waters 2005: p. 527).

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FURTHER READING

Lanfranchi, Roaf, and Rollinger 2003 (together with Waters 2005 and Rollinger 2020a) present the best and most comprehensive overview on all available sources of the “Median dilemma” and the problems connected with this issue. Adali 2011 offers a broad introduction to the concept of the ethnic term Umman-manda in Mesopotamian sources. Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1988 and 1995, as well as the less well-known but nevertheless excellent paper Kienast 1999 are still masterpieces of historical analysis of the problem. This also goes for Liverani 2003. On Herodotus and Ctesias see the various contributions in Rollinger, Truschnegg, and Bichler 2011, and Wieschöfer, Rollinger, and Lanfranchi 2011; cf. also Waters 2017. For the problems connected with the reconstruction of the Median language, Rossi 2010 and 2017 are excellent introductions.

CHAPTER 26

Urartu

Mirjo Salvini

On the southern slope of the Rock of Van, on the eastern shore of Lake Van in eastern Turkey, still today one can admire this trilingual inscription by Xerxes, son of Darius (Figure 26.1):

“A great god is Ahuramazda, the greatest of gods (...) (16–27) Saith Xerxes the king: King Darius, who was my father, he by the favour of Ahuramazda built much good (construction), and this niche he gave orders to dig out, where he did not cause an inscription (to be) engraved. Afterwards I gave orders to engrave this inscription. May Ahuramazda together with the gods protect me, and my kingdom, and what has been built by me” (Schmitt 2009: pp. 180–182: XVa).

In spite of its generic content, there is a symbolic and programmatic significance in the very fact that this inscription was engraved in the central part of Van Kalesi (Figure 26.2), the old Urartian capital Դաշքա, beside the monumental rock chambers and inscriptions of the Urartian kings of the ninth and eighth centuries BCE. This is the only royal Achaemenid inscription outside of Persia. Its position proves that Darius and Xerxes were fascinated by the site and recognized the importance of the old kingdom of Urartu – henceforth part of the Achaemenid Empire as the satrapy of Armina (Old Persian § 6 I: Schmitt 2009: pp. 36–91)/Uraštu (Accadian § 6.23.24: Malbran-Labat 1994) – for the ideology of their kingship (Seidl 1994).



Figure 26.1 Van, trilingual rock inscription of Xerxes I.



Figure 26.2 The Rock of Van in 2008.

Although *Ṭuṣpa* at Xerxes' time had been abandoned for one and a half centuries, the monumental achievements of the Urartian kings were certainly visible between the end of the sixth and the beginning of the fifth centuries BCE.

It would be astonishing if the Persian kings, knowing the accomplishments of this civilization, which was older than the Median one, were not somewhat influenced by it.

Assyrian Records on Urartu

In the Assyrian annals we first encounter the name of Urartu (in the forms Uraṭri/Uruaṭri), which was one of the principal objectives of the Assyrian expeditions toward the northern mountains from the Middle Assyrian period on, that is to say starting from the thirteenth century BCE (Salvini 1995: 18 ff). The populations that settled north of the Taurus range were repeatedly invaded by the Assyrian armies of Shalmaneser I (1273–1244), Tukulti-Ninurta I (1243–1207), Tiglath-pileser I (1114–1076), and Aššur-bel-kala (1073–1056). The name Urartu is attested in the Assyrian annals from the ninth century onward. But also Nairi (RIA s.v.) is important for the history of Urartu, because the first Urartian kings of the ninth century BCE, Sarduri I (RIA s.v.) and his son Išpuini (in the Assyrian version of his bilingual stela of Kelišin: CTU A 3-11) claimed to be “king of the country of Nairi,” thus linking up with a prestigious political tradition of the independent mountain populations. The cuneiform inscriptions of Išpuini and the following kings designate them even as “King of the country of Biainili,” a local name which later corresponds to Urartu in the Assyrian version of the bilingual stelae by Rusa I (CTU A 10-3, Movana, and 5, Topzawa).

One of the natural gates through the eastern Taurus lies on the modern road connecting Diyarbakır with Bingöl. In the eleventh century BCE Tiglath-pileser I, and after him Shalmaneser III in the ninth century, left written records on the border of the Urartian territory: the famous reliefs and inscriptions on the “Tigristunnel” (RIA s.v.). The annals of Shalmaneser III record the conquest of Sugunia, the city of “Aramu, the Urartian,” in 858 BCE and his “royal city” of Arzaškun in 856 BCE. In 832 BCE the Assyrian field marshal crossed the river Arsania (Murad Su) and defeated “Seduru, the Urartian” (RIA s.v. Salmanassar III). This new name is the link with the indigenous Urartian documentation, namely with Sarduri I (RIA s.v.).

Tušpa, Center of the Urartian Power: Sarduri I

The oldest building in Van Kalesi is the “Sardursburg,” defined thus by Lehmann-Haupt during his “Armenische Expedition” in 1898–1899 (Lehmann-Haupt 1926: 18 ff). This structure of huge well-squared limestone blocks laid in five regular courses was probably a quay or wharf. Six cuneiform inscriptions are carved into these blocks in the Assyrian language and Neo-Assyrian ductus. They are all duplicates of the text of Sarduri I (c. 840–830 BCE), who must be considered as the founder of the Urartian capital Tušpa (Salvini 1995: pp. 34–38):

Inscription of Sarduri, son of Lutipri, great king, powerful king, king of the universe, king of Nairi, king without equal, great shepherd, who does not fear the fight (...). Sarduri says: I have brought here these foundation stones from the city of Alniunu, I have built this wall (Wilhelm 1986: p. 101).

With this written document, which was discovered by the pioneer Schulz together with other 41 Urartian inscriptions (Schulz 1840), begins not only the history of the Urartian kingdom but also the written documentation for the entire mountainous region stretching across eastern Turkey, Armenia, and Iranian Azerbaijan.

We have no other written records signed by Sarduri I documenting his deeds, but the very fact that he fought against the powerful Assyrian king Shalmaneser III demonstrates a certain political importance and military power.

Sarduri's Successor

Sarduri's son Išpuini (end of the ninth century BCE) introduced the use of the indigenous Urartian language, the language of the dynasty. He left us some building inscriptions celebrating the construction of a system of fortresses around Van (CTU A 2). Very soon he involved his son and heir apparent Minua in his military expeditions directed to far-lying countries such as the region north of the river Araxes, the basin of Lake Urmia, and the province of Nakhičevan.

The two kings campaigned against the tribes of Luša, Katarza, and Uiteruḫi in today's Armenia (CTU A 3-4–A 3-7) and in the modern territory of Nakhičevan (CTU A 3-8).

King Išpuini, "Lord of the city of Țuṣpa," achieved the final unification into one state of all the peoples settled over a wide territory of the Armenian highland, and also the annexation of the territory east of the Zagros mountains, the modern territory of Iranian Azerbaijan. We have no idea of the ethnic composition of the new state. All we can say for the Urartians, who were the driving force and center of the kingdom, is that according to the language of the royal inscriptions, they were neither Semites nor Indo-Europeans. They were related only to the Hurrians who are attested from the end of the third to the beginning of the first millennium BCE in many regions of the Near East (Salvini 2000). However, the element binding the peoples unified in the Urartian kingdom was not only the use of the Urartian language in progressive substitution of the Assyrian one.

The Religion as “*Instrumentum Regni*”

Išpuini was the first Urartian king who knew how to exploit the religious element, which would become the basis of the state. There are two major written documents testifying to this policy. The first is the Kelišin stela (CTU A 3-11), erected on the 3000 m high pass of the Zagros range, which deals with a political pilgrimage by Išpuini and his son Minua around 810 BCE to the temple of the god Țaldi in Mušařir. The Kelišin stela shows that the city-state and international sanctuary of Mušařir, situated in today’s Iraqi Kurdistan, was controlled by the Urartians around 820–810 BCE, the period in which we must date the numerous joint inscriptions of Išpuini and Minua.

The most meaningful evidence of Išpuini’s policy is the open air sanctuary of Meher Kapısı near Van, with its rock inscription (CTU A 3-1) fixing the whole Urartian pantheon headed by the supreme triad: the god Țaldi, the weather god Teiřeba (cf. the Hurrian Teřub), and the sun god řiui. It is an inventory of animal sacrifices offered to a long list of gods and goddesses, in connection with the seasonal labors of agriculture. Such a monument and its ideology were the consequence of the conquest and the establishment of a protectorate over the city-state of Mušařir and its international sanctuary of god Țaldi. Išpuini, introducing the cult of Țaldi in his realm, must be considered as the second founder of the Urartian state on a theocratic basis. From that time the Urartian kings stood under the “protection” (Urartian *uřmaře*, Assyrian *řillu*) of their national god Țaldi.¹ They gave, in fact, enormous importance to Țaldi’s temple at Mušařir, at least from the time of Išpuini up to Rusa I, when the final clash with the Assyrians took place, namely in 714 BCE with the Eighth Campaign of Sargon and the sack of Mušařir (Thureau-Dangin 1912).

During the time of the co-regency between Išpuini and Minua (c. 820–810 BCE) the most important military expeditions were directed eastward, beyond the Zagros range. The Karagündüz stela (CTU A 3-9) records a single campaign directed against Meřta and three other cities, and the land of Parřua, an early mention of Persian tribes. The name of the city of Meřta is the link with the plain between Nagadeh and Miyandoab, south of Lake Urmia in Iranian Azerbaijan. In fact, it is mentioned also in the later inscription of Minua in Tařtepe (CTU A 5-10). Thus I suggested the identification of Meřta with Tappeh Hasanlu (in Pecorella and Salvini 1984: pp. 19–21) because it was the main city in that region at the end of the ninth century BCE (Salvini 1993). This seems to fit well with the burned level of Hasanlu IV and with its radio-carbon dating (Muscarella 2012). However, one cannot exclude an alternative

identification with another site, for example Nagadeh, in the same region, but this would not change the matter. Even Paršua, or part of it, should be located in this period not far from the southern shore of Lake Urmia. But this contrasts with the location of Paršua (RIA s.v.) further to the south, even on the basis of the Assyrian texts of the ninth century BCE itself (Salvini 2009).

The Urartian presence at Hasanlu, in level IIb, has to be stressed particularly: the so-called “Fortification Wall II” was built by the Urartians around the eighth century BCE (Dyson 1989: pp. 6–7). Moreover, with regard to the northwestern shores of Lake Urmia, we must add the presence of the Urartians in the valley of Salmas, as is attested by level III at Haftavan Tappeh (Burney 1971).

The Citadel of Van Kalesi and Its Historical Monuments

The acropolis of the Urartian capital lies on the central section of the rocky crest (Figure 26.2). Situated on the highest point of the rock (approximately 90 m), its perimeter follows the line of the rock, as may clearly be noted from the south side.

The northern wall of the citadel reveals different building phases. The great size and quality of the squared-off stone blocks at the base of the wall show similarities with the “Sardursburg” and must date back to the time of Sarduri I, although we do not have a foundation inscription to confirm this.

On the southern slope of Van Kalesi are the chambers of Horhor, the main monument left to us by Argišti I, son of Minua (André-Salvini and M. Salvini 1992, with previous bibliography). The long inscription of his annals with the deeds of the king, decorating the entrance of this rock mausoleum, is the most extensive document in Urartian cuneiform epigraphy (CTU A 8-3). Not only the conquests in Transcaucasia and in northern Iran are celebrated here but even the foundation of two important towns in Armenia, namely Erebuni and Argištiḫinili. Many rock tombs (beside some other huge chamber complexes of unknown purpose) are still visible on the south slope of Van Kalesi, which can be linked with the later Achaemenid rock tombs (Calmeyer 1975). An important architectural feature which connects the two civilizations is the Urartian tower temple (high, square with edge buttresses, and with one single cella), which is perhaps the precedent of the Kaba-ye Zardušt (Stronach 1967, 2012).

The Annals of Sarduri II in Hazine Kapisi (CTU A 9-1-3)

On the northern slope of the eastern sector of Van Rock the Russian expedition of 1916 unearthed the famous text of the Annals of Sarduri II, son of Argišti (Marr and Orbeli 1922). The first successful military expeditions of

this king, who reigned between 755 and c. 730 BCE, are summarized at the beginning of his annals: the conquest of the lands Uelikuhî in Armenia, Tulihû in Transcaucasia, and, most importantly, a victory over the Assyrian king Aššurnirari V (754–746 BC) in the first years of his reign (Salvini 1995: 66 ff). Following his father, Sarduri made expeditions against the countries of Mana (Assyrian Mannea: RIA s.v.), Babilu, and Baruata in Iran, and Etiuni and Erikuaḫi in Armenia, with the conquest of the southern shore of Lake Sevan. Furthermore, he reached the northern land of Qulḫa, in which we identify the oldest record of classical Colchis.

The expedition against Miliṭia (modern Malatya), recalled in the annals (in CTU A 9-1 rev.), was recorded on the rock (CTU A 9-4) overlooking the Euphrates on the bank opposite to the Melitene. Beyond the Euphrates, in the region of Commagene (Assyrian Kummuhî, Urartian Qumaḫa), one of the greatest struggles between the Assyrians and the Urartians took place in 743 BCE (RIA s.v. Sarduri). The Annals of Tiglath-Pileser III relate the Assyrian victory in the battle of Commagene, pushing the Urartians back to the east of the river which marked the western frontier of the Urartian kingdom (Tadmor 1994: pp. 100–101).

The Urartian expansion in Iranian Azerbaijan, toward the Caspian sea, is testified by the rock inscription (CTU A 9-8) and the fortress of Seqendel (Kleiss and Kroll 1980), east of Tabriz, recording the conquest of the country of Puluadi and its capital city Libliuni together with many fortresses. In the Annals of Sarduri (CTU A 9-3 D 8-13) the same episode is narrated.

The War Between Rusa I and Sargon for the Control of Northwestern Iran

The Assyrian sources tell us that under Rusa I (c. 730–713 BCE), the contacts between Urartians and Mannaeans became more intense, and we can assume the existence of a direct influence of Urartu on the northern Mannaeen territories: a kind of protectorate. The Mannaeen prince Metatti of Zikirtu is presented as a vassal of king Rusa, and this situation soon led to a war with Assyria (Salvini in Pecorella and Salvini 1984: pp. 35–51).

During Rusa I's reign, west Azerbaijan was the center of important historical events (RIA s.v. Rusa). The three bilingual stelae erected by Rusa I on both sides of the Zagros range (CTU A 10-3, 4, 5) show that the road along the western shore of the Urmia lake and through the pass of Kelišin was still the main access route of the Urartians through the Zagros to the city and temple of Muṣaṣir. The common text of those three documents tells us of the defeat of the local king Urzana, who had behaved like an enemy against Rusa, preventing him from entering Ḫaldi's sanctuary.

Rusa was at the height of his power: he had conquered the lands in Transcaucasia, at the expense of the tribes living beyond Lake Sevan (CTU A 10-2). Moreover, he ruled a large part of the Mannaeen territory and Muşasir, even reaching the valley of the Lesser Habur river.

But Rusa's "days of joy" were suddenly interrupted by two political-military catastrophes, which would be fatal to him. These are the Cimmerian invasion and Sargon's Eighth Campaign in 714 BCE (Thureau-Dangin 1912). The relative chronology of the two events, as well as their "geography," is controversial (one can read the different opinions in *Biainili-Urartu* 2012).

The news of a military clash between Urartu and the Cimmerians (Gimirra) appears in the letters of the Assyrian intelligence service. Some letters to king Sargon refer directly to this event, and they speak of the Urartian's defeat and losses. Other letters deal with the Urartian preparations for the expedition against the "land of Gimirra" (Lanfranchi and Parpola 1990).

The letter SAA V 145 (Deller in Pecorella and Salvini 1984: pp. 102–103. No 2.1) clearly says that the Cimmerians came "from the land of Mana," that is from the southeast, not directly from the north, i.e. from the Caucasian mountains, as the traditional reconstruction maintains. I think that this episode took place not long before the Eighth Campaign, perhaps in 715 BCE.

The Last Century of the Urartian History

During the seventh century BCE the relations between Urartu and Assyria apparently became peaceful. Argišti II, successor to Rusa I, was concentrated in the northern territories, as we learn from his rock inscriptions in Azerbaijan and a stele in Armenia (CTU A 11-3,4,5,6), and his son Rusa II excelled in the construction of beautiful fortified towns and residences like Karmir-blur, Bastam, Kef Kalesi (literature by Zimansky 1998), Ayanis (Çilingiroğlu and Salvini 2001), and Toprakkale. The construction of Toprakkale (RIA s.v. Rusaḫinili) was probably begun by Rusa II and completed by Rusa III, son of Erimeña. He was the reformer of the Urartian state organization, introducing writing on clay tablets and bullae, unknown before, and the parallel use of a linear (hieroglyphic) script for administrative purposes. The excavation of his towns has restituted a great quantity of bronze objects, which is the most known achievement of the Urartians (Seidl 2004). Rusa III, son of Erimeña, constructed the huge dams of the Rusa Lake (modern Keşiş Göl) for the irrigation of the plain of Van and the residence of Toprakkale (CTU A 14-1,2). The succession of both homonymous kings is controversial (Seidl 2007; Salvini 2007), and the circumstances of the end of the Urartian kingdom are still obscure (different solutions are reflected in some contributions of *Biainili-Urartu* 2012, especially by Ursula Seidl and Michael Roaf).

Robert Rollinger (2009), on the basis of a new reading of the Nabonidus Chronicle, maintains that Urartu was not destroyed by the Medes in the seventh century BCE but survived until the campaign of Cyrus in 547 BCE. It is possible that some form of state survived after the extinction of the written records, but it was no more the imperial power of the preceding centuries. A few decades later, with his equation Armina = Uraštu, Darius testifies the presence of the new ethnic element, the Armenians, in the old Urartian territory. If we speak of political continuity, we have to stress that no one of the usurpers against whom Darius fought presents himself as the king of Urartu, and there is no reference to the old capital city of Tušpa. However the name Haldita (Bisutun § 39) proves that at least the cult of the god of Muşaşir survived after the end of Urartu.

The last mentions of Urartu, in the Babylonian form Uraštu, refer to a geographical area more than to a policy. Nevertheless, some cultural influences could have entered the Achaemenid Empire. Besides the abovementioned elements we can find a precedent for the phenomenon of inscriptions written in the name of the ancestors, like those of Pasargadae (Schmitt 2009: CMA, CMb→DMc), written by Darius in the name of Cyrus, and of Genç Nameh, written by Xerxes (Schmitt 2009: p. 10) for his father Darius: the duplicate inscriptions of Işpuini's fortress in Zivistan (CTU A 2-2A–E), south of Van, were certainly engraved in the second part of the reign of his son Minua (CTU IV pp. 321–322).

Urartian Chronology

Assyrian kings	Synchronisms (see Fuchs 2012)	Urartian kings
Shalmaneser III (859–824 BCE)	Quotes Ar(r)amu the Urartian (years 859, 856, 844 BCE)	[no written records]
Shalmaneser III	Quotes Seduri, the Urartian (year 832 BCE)	[written records of:] = Sarduri I, son of Lutibri ^a (c. 840–830 BCE)
Shamshi-Adad V (823–811 BCE)	Quotes Ušpina (year 820 BCE)	= Işpuini, son of Sarduri (c. 830–820 BCE) Co-regency of Işpuini and Minua (c. 820–810 BCE)
	[no synchronism]	Minua, son of Işpuini (c. 810–785/780 BCE)

Assyrian kings	Synchronisms (see Fuchs 2012)	Uartian kings
Shalmaneser IV (781–772 BCE)	Quotes Argištu/i (year 774 BCE)	= Argišti I, son of Minua (785/78–756 BCE)
Ashur-nirari V (754–745 BCE)	Quoted by (year 754 BCE)	Sarduri II, son of Argišti (756–c. 730 BCE)
Tiglath-pileser III (744–727 BCE)	Quotes Sarduri, Sardaurri (years 743, 735? BCE)	= Sarduri II
Sargon (721–705 BCE)	Quotes Ursā/Rusā (years 719–713)	= Rusa I, son of Sarduri (c. 730–713 BCE)
	Quotes Argišta (year 709 BCE)	= Argišti II, son of Rusa (713–? BCE)
Sennacherib (704–681 BCE)	[no synchronism]	
Esarhaddon (681–669 BCE)	Quotes Ursā (year 673/672 BCE)	= Rusa II, son of Argišti (first half of the seventh century BCE)
		Erimena (^{LÚ} ašuli?) ^b
Ashurbanipal (669–627 BCE)	Quotes Rusā (year 652 BCE) ^c	= Rusa III, son of Erimena
Ashurbanipal	Quotes Ištar/Issar-dūri (year 646/642 BCE)	= Sarduri III, son of Sarduri

^a No written records of him.

^b Cf. my attempt to interpret the seal of Erimena, and the chronological problems concerning the seventh century BCE: Salvini 2007.

^c We have to take into consideration the new dendrochronology following which Rusaḫinili Eidurukai (Ayanis) was built in the second half of the 670s BCE: Manning et al. 2001, p. 2534; Çilingiroğlu 2006, 135.

Last Records on Uraṣtu

Nabopolassar (625–605 BCE): pīḫāt ^{KUR}Uraṣtu (years 608, 607 BCE)

Sedekias, King of Juda (568–587 BCE): ʾrrt (year 594 BCE)

Nabonidus Chronicle 7, 15–18 (year 547 BCE): ʾÚl-[raṣ-tu (Cyrus II)

Babylonian sources of the sixth century: ^{LÚ}Uraštaja (nisbe)

Babylonian Map of the World: Uraṣtu

Darius I (521–486 BCE), Bisutun: Uraṣtu/Armina

Xerxes (485–464 BCE): Uraṣtu/Armina

Darius II (424–404 BCE): Uraṣtu

Artaxerxes II (404–359 BCE) or III (359–358 BCE) (Persepolis):
Arminiya

NOTE

- 1 Cf. also the PN Ḫaldi-nāṣir “Ḫaldi is protector”, Baker 2000, p. 442; Salvini 2018.

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CHAPTER 27

From Assurbanipal to Cambyses

Robert Rollinger

Introduction

Having a look at handbooks dealing with the history of the Ancient Near East, older as well as more recent ones, there appears to be a general agreement on the outline of the political history of the first millennium BCE. The epoch is conceptualized as a succession of three clearly defined empires. The first one, the Neo-Assyrian Empire, is regarded as representing a turning point in history by its establishment of imperial structures that are connected with the claim to rule the world. It is succeeded by the Neo-Babylonian Empire and the Persian Empire which, on the one hand, follow the imperial trajectory introduced by the Assyrians but, on the other hand, have their own individual and distinctive conceptions of empire and state.

This more or less canonized modern view of the historical development of the first millennium BCE has its merits. The three empires are dealt with as different states that created different bureaucracies and ideologies. They are ruled from different core areas and are controlled by distinctive social elites who are the decisive pillars of the state and give it structure and meaning. More precisely, the Neo-Assyrian empire had a well-defined core area formed by the River Tigris and its two major tributaries, the Upper and the Lower Zab, where all major centers of the empire were located, i.e. from north to south, Dūr Šarrukīn, Ninua (Nineveh), Arba'ilu, and Assur (Libbi-āli). The empire, including the provinces, was conceptualized as “land Aššur” (māt

Aššur) and ruled by a king who acted in accordance with and as an agent of the god Aššur (cf. Lanfranchi and Fales 2006; Radner 2014; Frahm 2017).

The Neo-Babylonian Empire's core region was Babylonia, i.e. the alluvial plains to the south of modern Baghdād including the area along the lower Diyala river. There was only one royal seat, i.e. Babylon, and the core area was defined as the "land of Sumer and Akkad." The king who, in contrast to his Assyrian counterpart, did not also act as a priest, ruled as an agent of Marduk and Nabû (Jursa 2014).

With the Persian kings another shift took place. For the first time the imperial core area was outside Mesopotamia proper, although there was a royal palace in Babylon and the city still enjoyed a high level of prestige. However, the king's and the leading elites' identities were no longer Babylonian but were bound to western and southwestern Iran. Anšan/Pārsa (modern Fārs), Elam, and Media (central western Iran) were defined as the new core areas, where the kings resided in newly constructed palace complexes at Ekbatana (Hamādan), Susa, Pasargadai, and Pārsa (Persepolis) (Wiesehöfer 2009; Rollinger 2014a). Beginning with Darius I the god Ahuramazda played a major role, and the leading imperial elites were distinctively Iranian and formed an "ethno-classe dominante" (Briant 1996) all over the empire (Jacobs 2012; Rollinger 2015; Wiesehöfer 2016). In the core areas the kings started to erect inscriptions in three different languages, and additional translations were made and distributed in other parts of the empire. The imperial and multilingual character of the state is also visible in the fact that, beyond this general outline of imperial representation, the kings presented themselves differently in different parts of the empire. In Babylonia they acted as Babylonian kings, whereas in Egypt they presented themselves as Egyptian pharaohs. This kind of political flexibility and diversification was only partly anticipated by the Neo-Assyrian kings, when some of them tried to engage as kings of Babylon as well. As far as we know, the Neo-Babylonian kings never acted in a similar way, but were eager to demonstrate the Babylonian character of their kingship. Seen through this lens the traditional view of these three empires as distinct and individual entities appears to be justified. But there are other aspects that deserve to be considered as well.

On the one hand, the idea of three distinctive empires is to some extent a very modern one. Although, as has already been indicated, there are good arguments for this idea, it is only one side of the coin. When we look at the Babylonian king lists, as far as they are preserved for this period and as far as they cover the entire period of Neo-Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian, and Persian history, there is no clear distinction between these empires. This is astonishing, for Babylonian king lists dealing with other periods definitely provide the dynastic affiliation for a number of rulers: see, for example, Babylonian King List A, which even notes different branches of Neo-Assyrian kings originating

from just one family (Fales 2014). It is evident that the king lists in question exhibit a specific perspective, although other more contemporary sources, for example Nabopolassar's royal inscriptions, are keen to underline the fact that a new era started with this king's reign (Da Riva 2013: pp. 5–9). Thus, the king lists demonstrate that a retrospective emic view could ignore the breaks between different dynasties and highlight continuity.

The Uruk King list covers a period from Kandalānu (647–627 BCE), who reigned as Assurbanipal's puppet king in Babylonia, to Seleucus II (246–226 BCE). Without any notation or dividing line, Nabopolassar (625–605 BCE), the founder of the Neo-Babylonian Empire, succeeds Sin-šarru-iškun (627–612 BCE), the last Neo-Assyrian king who was inaugurated as king in the city of Assur. The same is true for Cyrus the Great who follows Nabonidus (556–539 BCE), the last king of the Neo-Babylonian Empire. And it also applies to Alexander the Great who seamlessly succeeds Darius III, and to Antigonos Monophthalmus who follows Alexander's half-brother Philip III, as well as to Seleucus I who follows Antigonos, although it was he who founded the Seleucid Empire. What we have is an apparently continuous line of kings without a marking of "state" or dynasty. There is no distinction at all between these rulers. The same applies for another important document that is still the backbone for our chronology of the first millennium BCE. The so-called Ptolemaic Canon is a king list that is preserved in a considerable number of manuscripts (Depuydt 1995). It starts with the Babylonian king Nabu-nasir and continues through Neo-Babylonian, Persian, Seleucid, and Ptolemaic times until the Roman Empire. In this case too shifts in the conception of empire are only recognizable indirectly. This is especially true for the shift from Babylon (Neo-Babylonian, Persian, and Macedonian kings) to Alexandria (Ptolemaic kings) and from there to Rome. Concerning the layout of the document there is no distinction between the Babylonian and Persian kings. Together with Alexander the Great they form a continuous line of kings that all subscribe to the era of Nabu-nasir. Only with Alexander's half-brother Philip III does a new era start that continues through Roman times (Depuydt 1995). It is true that the document was only used for astronomical counting, but it is nevertheless interesting to note that our modern conception of empire did not play any role in it at all.

On the other hand, it becomes increasingly obvious that major developments in the history of the Persian Empire can only be adequately understood when they are seen in larger historical contexts. The three empires share a common stream of tradition that cannot be ignored, which affects culture, kingship, ideology, world view, and bureaucracy. This also applies for general political developments that concern conquest, dynasty, self-perception, and the fundamental question of the stability or weakness of these three empires. Thus, for a better understanding of the Persian Empire it is necessary to

develop a broader perspective and locate it within the context of a succession of Ancient Near Eastern empires, a context that starts with the evolution of the Neo-Assyrian Empire some centuries before.

General Aspects of *Longue Durée* Developments: Conquest and Growth of Empire

Where conquest and growth are concerned, the Persian empire can be described as a direct successor of the Neo-Assyrian Empire. From the time of Ashurnasirpal II (883–859 BCE) and Shalmaneser III (858–824 BCE) the Neo-Assyrian state developed as an empire. The backbone of this progression was a powerful and increasingly multiethnic army that was successfully professionalized (Fuchs 2011). With this powerful instrument the Neo-Assyrian kings started to conquer all the core areas of the Ancient Near East beginning with northern Mesopotamia, parts of southern Anatolia and northwestern Iran. Under Tiglath-pileser III (746–727 BCE) the regions to the west of the Euphrates were organized as provinces and permanently integrated into the empire. Babylonia was ruled in personal union, and southern Anatolia and western Iran became part of the empire. Sargon II (721–705 BCE) and his son Sennacherib (705–681 BCE) consolidated these achievements. The last independent city-states on the Upper Euphrates and in southern Anatolia were eliminated, Cilicia became a province, and the city-states of Cyprus were controlled as vassals. Assyrian influence reached as far as Tabal (Cappadocia), parts of the central Zagros area were provincialized, and Urartu, a cumbersome political competitor, was beaten and reined in. Only Babylonia continued to create problems, which were not solved until the reigns of Esarhaddon (680–669 BCE) and Assurbanipal (668–631 BCE), when Assyria reached its apogee. Control of Tyre meant that the Assyrian perspective now included the whole Mediterranean as far as the Straits of Gibraltar (Rollinger 2008, 2014b). The delta of the Nile and Upper Egypt were conquered, and Arabian tribes in Syria and on the Arabian peninsula acknowledged Assyrian suzerainty. An ensemble of tribes that the Assyrians called *Madāya* (Medes) was also controlled by the empire, whose influence in the east probably reached as far as the region of modern Teheran (Radner 2003; Rollinger 2007). Another political competitor, Elam in southwestern Iran, was beaten decisively, and diplomatic ties were established with the emerging power of Lydia in western Anatolia. The Assyrian Empire ruled the “world,” and this claim was verbalized and disseminated by the inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian kings (Rollinger 2014b). So far, the history of the empire was a history of ongoing conquests and imperial growth and contemporaries may have thought that this empire would never come to an end and soon subdue all the remaining independent

states in the Middle East. Yet, this was a fallacy, or, at least partly, an erroneous belief. It was a fallacy because within 20 years of the death of Assurbanipal the empire crumbled and disappeared from the political landscape (Liverani 2001; Fuchs 2014). But at the same time it was only partly an erroneous belief since the Assyrian heritage remained intact because the structure and idea of an empire established by the Assyrians survived and kept its dynamics for the next 300 years at least.

From a higher and overarching perspective that focuses on the expansionist structure of empires (Gehler and Rollinger 2014), the Neo-Assyrian Empire was succeeded by a period of about two-thirds of a century when no new dynasty could be established. The ruling monarchs were eager to maintain the imperial idea, but this idea was expressed in an entirely new form. Although the empire was reestablished after the conquests of Nebuchadnezzar II (605–562 BCE), this did not happen on the same scale as before, and the empire's ongoing expansionist dynamic clearly faded. It is true that Neriglissar (560–556 BCE) and Nabonidus waged wars in the west and that the latter was heavily engaged on the Arabic peninsula. But the general outline of their politics was much more focused on preserving what had already been achieved than on opening up new areas of conquest. This defensive element in imperial policy was a distinctive characteristic of the Neo-Babylonian Empire, and it comes as no surprise that in its royal inscriptions military affairs only play a minor role (Da Riva 2008). Apart from some areas on the northwestern Arabian peninsula, which were controlled by Nabonidus, not a single region was subdued that had not already been under the sway of the Neo-Assyrian Empire. Preserving what had already been part of the Neo-Assyrian Empire was the motto, not subduing regions and areas which lay beyond its boundaries.

This period of imperial stagnation radically changed with the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus the Great in 539 BCE. With the Teispid Cyrus a new imperial power entered the stage of the Ancient Near East and, after about 70 years of expansionist standstill, reestablished a military vigor that not only vied with that of the Neo-Assyrians but eventually outperformed it and gave the idea of world empire entirely new dimensions. Because of a lack of sources we are not very well informed about each single step of the various conquests of Cyrus (about 550–530 BCE) and his son Cambyses (530–522 BCE). But these were major events that went far beyond the imperial achievement of their Neo-Assyrian predecessors. Already some time before the conquest of Babylonia, Cyrus had established a potent power base in Anshan, i.e. modern Fārs, from where he started to expand toward the north. We do not know exactly when he took control of the region of ancient Susiane, i.e. modern Khuzistān, but he certainly took a major step toward empire building when he subdued the mighty confederation of the Medes that ruled the central Zagros. This event

can be dated to 550 BCE, and from that time onward Cyrus controlled most of the resources of western and probably already central Iran (Rollinger 1999). In 547 BCE, Cyrus subjugated eastern Anatolia, where some successor states of the former Urartian Empire had stood the test of time (Rollinger/Kellner 2019). Sometime in the 540s he celebrated a further major victory, when he subjected the Lydian kingdom in western Anatolia. If we believe the account of the Greek historian Herodotus, other parts of western Anatolia were subdued by Cyrus' generals (Bichler 2000: pp. 263–266). This fits well with what we know from the Neo-Assyrian Empire where, besides the king, it was mighty magnates who were responsible for waging war (Mattila 2000). In any case, from this time onwards also Greek city-states in western Anatolia became part of the new empire being established by the Teispids. Thus, when Cyrus conquered the Neo-Babylonian Empire, he was no longer a nobody acting out of nowhere, but already ruled a strong and powerful state. This new empire included Mesopotamia and Syria as well and reached as far as the borders of Egypt. But this was by no means the end of the expansionist story.

We do not know exactly when Cyrus subjugated eastern Iran and vast regions of modern Central Asia as far as the river Iaxartes (Syr Darya). According to Greek sources it was toward the end of his reign (Bichler 2000: pp. 266–269). But this should not be taken uncritically as historical fact. The conquest of vast areas of central and eastern Iran could very well have been achieved step by step and Cyrus' son Cambyses may also have been involved in this major undertaking. In general, Greek sources have a very positive view on Cyrus. He is hardly ever described as aggressive, but much more as a heroic figure who only reacts when he is attacked or in danger (Shayegan 2018). This only changes when Cyrus started to campaign in Central Asia. Again, this campaign is only mentioned by classical sources (Bichler 2020). One of them, Herodotus, claims that Cyrus was killed in action while fighting against Central Asian nomads, whom the classical sources dub Scythians or Massagetae. Whether this is true or not cannot be verified, but the fact that some years later Darius I considered his victory over the Scythian leader Skunkha of such importance that he ordered a complete reshaping of the Bisitun monument in order to add a relief image of his opponent suggests that it was seen and celebrated as the defeat of an enemy who had even been able to resist Cyrus the Great (Waters 2014: p. 76; Rollinger/Degen 2020). In any case, with Cyrus, a new conqueror king entered the scene after the Neo-Assyrian kings. The astonishment and admiration aroused by these achievements are echoed not only by classical sources but also by the small Jewish community in Palestine and Babylonia, in whose eyes Cyrus represented the new Messiah. Yet, this new phase of expansion did not come to an end with Cyrus himself. Since the time of Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal, Egypt had been considered to be a part of the new Ancient Near Eastern imperial system. Where Nebuchadnezzar II had failed, Cambyses

achieved a major success. In a single campaign he subdued the land on the river Nile. As once again only classical sources testify, Cambyses probably also tried to get control of Cyrenaica and Nubia (Bichler 2000: pp. 270–272). Whether he failed and it was left to Darius I to include these countries in his empire is difficult to say (Giangiulio 2011). In any case, in the lists of lands which first appear in Achaemenid royal inscriptions in the reign of Darius I, Nubia/Ethiopia (Kūšā) and the people to the west of Egypt (Putāyā) were claimed to be part of the empire. The same is true for Cyprus, which was under control of the Persians from Darius I onwards at the latest (Wiesehöfer 2011).

Although the change from the Teispids to the Achaemenids was accompanied by a disastrous war that afflicted the whole empire, expansion did not come to an end with the establishment of a new dynasty by Darius I (521–486 BCE). With the first two kings, Darius I and his son Xerxes I (486–465 BCE), the expansionist agenda continued. As already mentioned, Darius I partly subjected the nomads of Central Asia and he enlarged the empire in the east as far as India, western regions of which, i.e. modern Pakistan, became part of the empire. The Scythian campaign to the north of the Black Sea, on which classical sources report, might never have taken place (Tuplin 2010; Rollinger/Degen 2020). But Thrace became a part of the empire and Macedonia a vassal state (Boteva 2011; Zahrnt 2011; Vasilev 2015). For the first time in the history of Ancient Near Eastern empires, the expansionist agenda was not only pursued via land forces. With the help of the city-states of the Syrian coast an imperial fleet was created, probably already under Cambyses, when he campaigned against Egypt and took control of Cyprus (Müller 2016). This navy became even more important when Darius began to operate in the Aegean (Klinkott 2020). With these endeavors, however, the empire appears to have suffered from imperial overstretch and it had to renounce direct control of the Greek world. Xerxes did at first try to follow the policy of his father and his Teispid predecessors, but in the end he established a new political doctrine and the empire entered a new stage in its history. As in Neo-Babylonian times, expansion was given up and the preservation of what had been achieved started to be the primary goal. Once again, this development was accompanied by new ideological positions in the royal inscriptions. Not only did waging war disappear from these texts, but history was regarded as having come to an end, since the Achaemenids claimed to rule the whole world. According to this ideology there was no power left that needed to be subdued (Rollinger 2014a). It is no surprise that this form of ideology was an integral part of the agenda of imperial preservation. And the empire was still very effective in this respect. Although the Aegean and Egypt were lost for some time, Persian influence could be successfully reestablished after some decades, in the first case indirectly with the King's Peace in 387 BCE, in the second directly with the reconquest of Egypt by Artaxerxes III in 343 BCE (Ruzicka 2012: pp. 66–82, 177–198).

When viewing Ancient Near Eastern history from this overarching perspective, the phase of preservation did not come to an end with the Achaemenids. It continued with Alexander the Great, who conquered huge parts of the Persian empire but was not able to add a single piece of land that had not already been under Achaemenid control. And the same holds true for about the first 100 years after Alexander's death, when first Perdikkas and Antigonos Monophthalmus and then the early Seleucids tried to secure what had been achieved by their Achaemenid predecessors. Only when the Seleucids failed with Antiochus III (222–187 BCE) and Antiochus IV (175–164 BCE) did the history of the Ancient Near Eastern empires, as it had been established by the Neo-Assyrian Empire, finally come to an end. This history had lasted for about 700 years, and the Teispid-Achaemenid Empire had been an integral part of it. Times of conquest had been followed by times of stagnation, which in turn gave way to periods when the expansionist agenda was reestablished. In the end, after the downfall of the Achaemenid Empire, people once again faced about 100 years of stagnation of imperial growth. In this long period imperial traditions were preserved to a considerable degree. Although dynasties changed and new imperial centers and regions emerged, the core areas of each imperial predecessor remained under the sway of the new empire. For this reason, it is not by chance that **the last preserved royal inscription in cuneiform originates from the time of the Seleucid king Antiochus I (281–261 BCE)** (Stevens 2014). Tradition still loomed large. But when the Seleucid Empire started to disintegrate, a new horizon of empire building emerged. There was no political power left that was capable of taking over the previous empire as a whole even simply to preserve it, let alone as a basis for a new expansionist agenda: the Achaemenid Empire remained the climax within this long-term development. Instead, with the Roman and Parthian Empires two new superpowers emerged on the fringes of this huge and ancient imperial structure. Neither of these two, however, was able to reconquer the whole; in the end, it was divided between them and a new era of two opposing empires started. This is another story, although in the succeeding centuries both opponents again and again tried to breach the newly established border at the river Euphrates. But neither the Roman emperors Trajan (98–117 CE) and Justinian (527–565 CE) nor the Sasanian Shahanshahs Khosrau I (531–579 CE) and Khosrau II (590–628 CE) were able to preserve their impressive short-term conquests for more than some years.

As we have seen, new powers emerged on the fringes of established empires and, after a period of coexistence, were prepared to challenge the older empire successfully. This phenomenon deserves attention and further explanation, since it is a characteristic of the long-term historical development of the Ancient Near East and has considerable relevance for the Achaemenid Empire.

Historians have long been aware that, both in antiquity and later, dynamic processes of “secondary state formation” take place on the fringes of empires and result in a sustained transformation of the societies in contact with those empires. Unfortunately, our written sources are frequently entirely ignorant about these revolutionary developments. They become visible only after the event, when political and military conflicts arise and we suddenly observe the results of what has been a long-term process. The encounters between, on the one hand, empires with comparatively highly developed bureaucracies and forms of political and administrative praxis, and, on the other hand, societies where political authority was less developed (often involving highly fragmented entities and an illiterate local culture) considerably changed the worlds of the latter. Both “center” and “periphery” became part of an imperial matrix that was defined by asymmetric relations. The newly established ties between these different worlds took various forms (Brown 1986; Harrison 2012: 633f.; Routledge 2016; Rollinger 2020).

On the one hand, trade and economic ties played a major role in the transformation of local systems and the introduction of new forms of exchange and economic mentalities. Smaller regions with their local economies and local production and exchange networks now became part of an imperial world system that not only triggered new kinds of specialization, but also opened up new markets and modes of exchange. These new conditions converted processes of production as well as the products themselves. Advances of this sort not only transformed local infrastructure and modes of production, but also had a big impact on the local elites who were in charge of these processes. These elites had previously focused on local networks, but suddenly entirely new possibilities of income and generating revenues emerged. These developments took place on the peripheries of empires, although these “peripheries” were not themselves a homogeneous world but were highly diversified. Increasingly they became crossroads of interaction, where local leaders, looking to their own interests, took advantage of the new basic conditions by monitoring and controlling transregional networks that were to a varying degree and with different nuances part of overarching imperial structures. How far these networks actually reached is difficult to say. But it has been demonstrated in recent decades that the networks triggered by the dynamics of the Neo-Assyrian Empire reached in the west as far as the Straits of Gibraltar and in the east as far as Central Asia and India.

On the other hand, the peripheries were open to various forms of sociopolitical influence from the adjacent empire. As already mentioned, the new streams of goods and commodities had to be organized and channeled. This in itself fostered political centralization and boosted the development of new political structures with transregional perspectives. But, again and again, the empire also demonstrated its presence on the “periphery” by political and

military intervention. The trajectory for such interventions was provided by the empire's thirst for expansion and the permanent and dynamic process of establishing new zones of direct and indirect rule. Empires do not have strictly fixed borders in the manner of modern national states, but develop border zones that are characterized by different modes of influence (Gehler and Rollinger 2014). Especially from the second half of the eighth century BCE onward there was a trend toward provincializing conquered areas and establishing direct rule via imperial bureaucracies. But, there were also various vassal states, where, on the surface, political control remained in the hand of local dynasties, but which actually became part of the empire (Lanfranchi 2011). And there was a zone beyond these structures, where there was still some indirect influence, be it through the vassal states and their governors or through diplomatic and economic ties. This ongoing process of political integration, which was also triggered by different modes of contributions, taxes, tribute, and "gift," substantially transformed the political structures of the "peripheries". Ways of ruling, political practice, imperial bureaucracy and administration, political ideology, political expression of power, and the economic basics for these new developments became common knowledge, were eagerly adapted and adopted, and created an entirely new type of local leader, one who copied and imitated imperial behavior but also became more and more aware of the possibilities of his own political agendas. Since these local leaders and their subjects generally contributed troops to the empire's army, they came into contact with the latter's superior military technology, and that was also taken up and readily acquired. Finally, there was the sophisticated high culture of the empire with its cities, temples, huge buildings, and material wealth, which not only established a measuring stick for local developments and orientations, but also generated a conception of pomp and circumstance that became an ongoing object of desire. This object could be sought by imitation and cultural transfer, but it could also provoke an appetite for appropriation, conquest, and plunder. With this a change in local mentalities went hand in hand. The empire was looked upon with fear and respect, admiration and hate (Melville 2015). One was part of the system, but at the same time able to develop new identities. The "periphery" had to find its place in a new world that was accomplished by integration and alienation at the same time. The new modes of thinking, exercising political power, and generating economic wealth were only possible because one was part of an imperial world system. Simultaneously, however, there was an overriding desire to ignore these bonds and to pursue one's own political ambitions in line with newly developed ethnic and sociopolitical identities. Complex developments of this sort were not an invention of the first millennium BCE, but the establishment of the Neo-Assyrian Empire provided an unprecedented stimulus for them to occur.

The result can be observed on all the “peripheries” of the Neo-Assyrian Empire but, at least for the time being, it took a somewhat different trajectory in the west, where the Mediterranean Sea hampered further territorial expansion. Things were different in the north, south, and especially in the east. Whereas in the west some kind of indirect control was guaranteed by taxing and monitoring the Levantine city-states (Bagg 2011), a process that went hand in hand with a spread of cultural and economic dynamics to the western regions, the exertion of influence on the political level was stronger in the other directions. The emergence of Urartu in the late ninth century BCE, the formation of Phrygia in the eighth century BCE and of Lydia in the seventh century BCE, as well as the establishment of the Neo-Elamite state in the seventh century BCE and the emergence of a united Babylonia in the same century, are developments that presuppose the existence and example of the Neo-Assyrian Empire. The same dynamics are operative in the east although the lack of suitable sources means that we are only able to understand these processes superficially. What we call “the Medes” is a conglomerate of different populations in the central Zagros that the Assyrians dubbed *Madāya* (Medes), and one that only latterly developed some kind of unified identity (Rollinger 2003, 2005; Rossi 2010). Iranian-speaking groups with a variety of local dialects probably formed a major group within this conglomerate, which came under Assyrian influence from the ninth century BCE onward (Radner 2003). We do not know exactly when these tribes were united by a commonly accepted leader, but this development appears to have been connected to the demise of the Neo-Assyrian Empire after the death of Assurbanipal in 630 BCE. The same is true for the unification of Babylonia, which was triggered at about the same time (Fuchs 2014). We also do not know how far the power and influence of the newly formed Median confederation reached to the east, but it may have exercised direct control at least as far as the region to the south of the Caspian Sea. The Median center was located in the central Zagros and, for a short time, i.e. between about 630/20 and 550 BCE, it appears to have developed an enormous political force (Rollinger 2010; Rollinger 2020). At any rate, the Babylonian Chronicle, our major source for the political history of this period, makes it clear that the newly formed Neo-Babylonian Empire would not have been capable of destroying the Neo-Assyrian Empire and its capitals without the help of its Median allies (Rollinger 2003: pp. 291–295).

At about the same time another process of secondary state formation took place in an area that had originally been controlled by the Neo-Elamite Empire. Probably around 600 BCE, a new political power emerged in the modern Iranian province of Fārs, which clearly exhibited an Elamite sociopolitical and cultural background, but at the same time involved political agents and elites with Iranian roots (Waters 2000; Henkelman 2008, 2011). The new political entity labeled itself Anshan and very soon developed a desire for

expansion as its Median neighbor to the north had already done (Rollinger 1999). Sometime in the first half of the sixth century BCE, Susiane, modern Khūzistān, became part of this state, and in 550 BCE, the Median confederation was subdued by Cyrus the Great, who presented himself as king of Anshan. Cyrus' success is reported not only in the Babylonian Chronicle but also in an inscription of the Neo-Babylonian king Nabonidus. This is important in its own right for, generally speaking, Ancient Near Eastern royal inscriptions refer to foreign regions only when they are subdued by or come under the direct or indirect control of Mesopotamian rulers. But times had already changed, and the dynamic processes of state formation that occurred on the periphery of the Mesopotamian empires could no longer be ignored (Rollinger 1999).

These processes are not only important as political facts, but are also significant for the history of the Mesopotamian empires. The formation of new states and new elites in the "peripheries" had repercussions for the empires themselves. As already mentioned, elites of this sort arose in contexts that were fundamentally shaped by imperial models, yet at the same time they devised political agendas and concepts of their own. All of this went alongside the emergence of enormous political and military power. The result was not only the destruction of the old empires by forces originating from these "peripheries", but also a takeover of the old empires by the new elites of these regions. Thus discontinuities and continuities were present at the same time. The idea of empire (its general structure and representation) survived, but the new elites set it against new backgrounds. This is true not only for the Median conglomerate and the Neo-Babylonian empire but also for the state of Anshan, which in a very short time developed into the strongest political power in the Ancient Near East. It has already been stressed that we only know a tiny amount about the different stages of its military expansion to the east. But, however much the emergence and structure of this state owed to its close contacts to the Elamite and Babylonian cultures, its astoundingly rapid expansion to the east can only have been possible because of pre-existing and probably transregional political structures. Just as the Median conglomerate, a result of secondary state formation on the fringes of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, finally overran that empire, so the state of Anshan, a product of secondary state formation on the peripheries of Elam and Babylonia, not only eliminated Elam, but eventually subdued the Neo-Babylonian Empire as well in 539 BCE. Once again, then, it was from the "periphery" that a new empire emerged, and this empire was not only powerful enough to take over the old one, but was capable of shaping a new one of unprecedented dimensions. During the reigns of Darius I and Xerxes I this empire was the largest one the world had ever seen. But, of course, it did not cover the entire world, and the principles of secondary state formation of previous times also applied on its fringes. In the

east it was again Iranian tribes that were mostly affected by these developments, in the west, it was the territorial states of Macedonia and Thrace, and then, half a century later, the Athenian Empire and Sparta. Although it is not a common approach in western scholarship, the confrontation of the Persian Empire with Athens, Sparta, and Macedonia can be explained and described as the result of evolving processes of state formation on the “periphery” of an empire. The only difference is that this time our sources mainly originate from the “periphery” and have specific perspectives on the events in question. These subjective and ideologically motivated perspectives have been generalized and become part of the western tradition. But, if we try to leave Hellenocentrism and Eurocentrism aside, we immediately recognize that we are dealing with general political trends and long-term trajectories that are less dependent upon a particular nation or race than on underlying structures. And as Cyrus emerged on the fringes of a world empire, which he eventually conquered, the same applies to Alexander and his conquest of the Achaemenid empire. A new power arose on the “periphery” of an empire that was eventually captured and subdued by that peripheral power. But this proved to be the last successful conquest of an entire empire in Ancient Near Eastern history. With the Parthian Arsacids in the East and Rome in the West new empires did again show up on the peripheries, but neither was now capable of regaining what the Achaemenids had established. They faced each other on the Euphrates and had to share the Achaemenid heritage.

Dynasty and Succession

In this discussion of various continuities and discontinuities between the Neo-Assyrian and the Persian-Achaemenid Empires one point remains to be dealt with, namely the problem of dynasty and succession. The Neo-Assyrian Empire is one of the empires (like those of the Sasanians and Ottomans) that was always ruled by a single family. But there are also empires that display a totally different character in this regard, e.g. the Roman empire. This means that the existence or non-existence of a single dynasty does not in itself reveal much about the stability or instability of these political structures. It is more important to focus on how firmly anchored and accepted the concentration of political power in the hands of one family was and how the state reacted to challenges to this power. The Persian Empire was ruled by two different dynasties, the Teispids and the Achaemenids (Rollinger 1998a, 2014a). But a closer look at political developments immediately reveals that it is appropriate, at least when focusing on the establishment of political power, to conceptualize the formation of the Teispid state within the context of the history of its Neo-Babylonian predecessor. With the Achaemenids, by contrast, a new and

much more successful idea of the state arose. Let us start once more with some remarks on the Neo-Assyrian Empire.

As already stressed, all Neo-Assyrian kings belonged to one single family (Eder and Renger 2004: pp. 18–19). They formed a stable dynasty, and their right to rule appears to have been not only generally accepted but also regarded as a fundamental feature of the empire. But this does not mean that the rule of Neo-Assyrian kings was not challenged. These challenges were various, and they should not automatically be equated with a crisis of the state. Usurpations took place fairly often, but as far as we can tell, it was nearly exclusively members of the royal family who challenged the reigning king or the crown prince's right to become the reigning king (Frahm 2016; Radner 2016). Since Ancient Near Eastern empires did not accept primogeniture, such revolts were not an extraordinary eventuality and they could occur without major turbulences.

The case was different when the murder of the king led to longer civil wars and different factions fought for the throne. This happened when the usurper did not gain immediate acceptance by the elites. In these cases, when conflicts were not limited to the capital and the entire empire was affected for a longer period of time, we can recognize a crisis that might in principle endanger the very existence of the empire. Such times of civil war and inner turbulence were not very frequent. We may identify examples in 826–820 BCE, when the aged Shalmaneser III withdrew from politics and important courtiers started to dominate political affairs, or in 763–746 BCE, when the once powerful courtier Šamšī-ilu gradually lost influence (Fuchs 2008). With Tiglath-pileser III (746–727 BCE) and his son Sargon II (721–705 BCE) crisis of this sort appears to have come to an end, although both were usurpers and there was considerable unrest at the very beginning of their reigns. But, after the murder of Sennacherib in 681 BCE, a major conflict arose about the succession that appears to have affected the entire empire. As often before (and later in the case of Xerxes I), the victor in this civil strife, Esarhaddon (680–668 BCE), was not the eldest son of the former king. And, like Xerxes I, he frankly referred to this fact and sought to legitimize his selection as crown prince and later king by reference to divine will and assistance. What is more, he also reported on the civil war after the death of his father. That, of course, does not reflect a love of historical truth, but the promotion of a particular perspective and agenda, one that was underpinned by continual allusions to divine support of victory and to the sacrilege of opponents who did not accept the divine will (Leichty 2011: pp. 11–15: Esarhaddon I, line i 8 – ii 39). Something similar had already been done by Šamšī-Adad V (Grayson 1996: p. 183: A.0.103.1 i 39–53), who legitimized victory over his brother Aššur-da'in-aplu in 826–820 in the same way. On a structural level, all this is very reminiscent of the civil war after the death of Cambyses in 522 BCE, Darius I's claim to power and legitimacy, and the monument of Bisitun (Rollinger 1998a, 2016).

At least in the cases of Šamšī-Adad V and Darius I we can be fairly sure that it was the usurper who eventually succeeded, while insisting upon the legitimacy of his rule. This legitimacy was dependent upon acceptance, and the people who had to do the accepting were the royal family and the elites of the empire. If there was homogeneity within this latter group, usurpation could not endanger the empire. But these elites had to be convinced, and this was achieved by legitimization strategies and ideological concepts that were announced in public via royal inscriptions, the contents of which were to be disseminated throughout the empire. Esarhaddon made some effort to avoid civil strife in the future. It is possible that he faced a revolt by a non-royal member of the imperial elite, a certain Sāsî, but this attempt at usurpation can only be reconstructed from indirect references in royal letters that hint at harsh measures against elite factions around 670 BCE (Radner 2007). In any case, in an unprecedented act, Esarhaddon sought to ensure the succession to the throne by administering an elaborate loyalty oath to the elites of the whole empire, i.e. the members of the royal court and of the central administration as well as each governor and his staff (Fales 2012; Lauinger 2012). As a result Esarhaddon's younger son Assurbanipal became king of Assyria, whereas the elder one Šamaš-šumu-ukīn was installed as king of Babylon. At the beginning, after Esarhaddon had died, this arrangement appears to have worked fairly well but in the end another war was unavoidable. This confrontation can also be described as a civil war, and it took Assurbanipal four years, from 652 to 648 BCE, to subdue his brother. But since the Assyrian elites appear uniformly to have assisted Assurbanipal and since there was no serious external enemy at this time, the empire as such was not in danger.

The situation dramatically changed with the death of Assurbanipal in 630 BCE. The heir apparent, Aššur-etel-ilāni (630–627 BCE), was a child, and the actual ruler was a powerful courtier, Sîn-šumu-līšir. But he appears not to have been able to gain the general acceptance of the imperial elites. This, at least, is what is implied by the unsuccessful usurpation of a certain Nabû-rehtu-ušur. This loss of community spirit among the imperial elites together with serious external threats sounded the bell for the last round of the Neo-Assyrian Empire. What followed was a combination of external and internal strife that lasted for about 20 years. Sîn-šumu-līšir tried to usurp the throne for himself but was thwarted when Sîn-šar-iškun (627–612 BCE), another son of Assurbanipal, appeared on the scene. Sîn-šar-iškun's primary task was then to save the empire, but unfortunately he had to face two rebellions at the same time, and to suppress both of them was something that exceeded the resources of the empire. One usurpation, that of a certain Itti-ilāni in the west, is only mentioned in passing in our sources. But the rebellion of Nabopolassar in Babylonia is reported in more detail in the Babylonian Chronicle and the king's own inscriptions. When the Medes

showed up as allies of the Babylonians, the resistance of the Assyrian Empire was finally broken and its traditional capitals were devastated, Assur in 614 BCE and Nineveh in 612 BCE. Egyptian intervention allowed the Assyrians to create a temporary refuge around Harran, but, when this city was captured in 609 BCE, the last Neo-Assyrian ruler Aššur-uballiṭ disappeared (Fuchs 2014).

With the successful campaigns of Nabopolassar and his son Nebuchadnezzar II a new empire with new elites and a new center arose. The Egyptians were expelled from Syria and the whole of Mesopotamia was under its firm control. But the sort of stability that had been achieved by the Neo-Assyrian Empire in its heyday could not now be reestablished. This is reflected in the fact that even militarily powerful and effective kings did not succeed in creating a new dynasty. They tried to do so, but they failed, and the dynastic sequence always broke down at the latest in the third generation with the appearance of a successful usurper. This unrest was due to tensions in the Babylonian elite that also became obvious when Nabonidus, the last Neo-Babylonian king, left Babylonia for about 10 years to hold court at Tēma in the Arabian peninsula. The fact that some of the usurpers of this period did not have royal ancestry, and did not even claim to have one, may hint at a certain loss of legitimacy and may have added to the political instability.

Thus, Nebuchadnezzar II installed his under-age son Amēl-Marduk (565–560 BCE) but the latter was eliminated by Nebuchadnezzar's son in law, Neriglissar. The latter's son Lā-abāš-Marduk only reigned for some months, when he again was removed by Nabonidus (556–539 BCE). With Bel-šarru-ušur a crown prince was introduced, but the military defeat against Cyrus once more prevented the establishment of a dynasty. Things did not immediately change with Cyrus. Cyrus appointed his son Cambyses as king of Babylon and some time later as crown prince of the empire (Petschow 1988; Peat 1989; Zawadzki 1996; Joannès 2020), and, after Cyrus' death, Cambyses duly became king in 530 BCE. But when he died, the very short reign of a certain Bardiya, who was probably Cambyses' brother, gave way to a major civil war, and the Teispids were wiped out. After more than a year of harsh fighting that affected the whole empire a new king, Darius I, entered the scene in 522/1 BCE. Soon he too installed a crown prince, and this time a new Achaemenid dynasty was founded that ruled the empire until the death of Darius III in 330 BCE.

Thus it was only with the Achaemenids that a dynasty was successfully reestablished in the manner familiar from Neo-Assyrian times. But the idea of dynastic succession was conceptualized in a new way, a fact that might also reflect an increased need for legitimization. In Neo-Assyrian times dynastic affiliation was expressed in royal inscriptions by multi-part filiations which

might also mention a common ancestor, as when Esarhaddon claimed succession from all Assyrian kings from Adasi onwards. The same approach is seen in king lists that referred to common and age-old ancestry. In the period between the Neo-Assyrians and the Achaemenids, this idea was both entirely given up and yet retained as an aspiration. Nabopolassar radically broke with the previous mode of legitimization and presented himself as “son of a nobody” (Da Riva 2013: p. 57: NaplC12, line 12; 94: NaplC32, line i 8).¹ Neriglissar frankly referred to his non-royal ancestry by naming his father Bēl-šumu-iškun (Da Riva 2013: p. 116: NeglC21, line i 11; 136: NeglC011, line i 11’; 128: NeglC23/7, line i 12; Negl23/1, line 14), and Nabonidus did not hide his non-royal background either (Schaudig 2001, 487f.: 3.1, i 7–9). At the same time in his inscriptions Nebuchadnezzar II again and again expressed his wish for the eternal reign of his progeny (*līpu*) and this idea was adopted by Neriglissar, although in both cases it was, as we know, a pious hope. By contrast, in his famous cylinder inscription Cyrus not only referred to his father and grandfather as kings, but also to a royal ancestor (*līlīpu*), Teispes by name (Finkel 2013: p. 131, line 20–22; Rollinger 2014c: p. 191). This was an obvious return to Assyrian practices, although, in the end, not a successful one. Darius I went one step further by combining old and new in an entirely novel manner. With eight members his line of antecedents was much longer than any previous one, but he only indirectly claimed that all of them had been kings. He also only adduced by name some members of this lineage, but, when he did so in the case of his father or grandfather, they were presented without any royal title (Rollinger 1998a). There was, however, another ancestor who was attributed much more importance than any other previous figure: for Darius did not content himself with just referring to this Achaemenes, but, for the first time in Ancient Near Eastern History, a new term was derived from his name to label the entire lineage “Achaemenid.” Whereas the term “Teispid” is a modern invention, “Achaemenid” is an authentic neologism, coined to convey the idea of a common royal house in new terminology. It was a royal house that prospered for a very long time. Of course, there was also conspiracy and regicide during this period (Dusinberre 2016; Waters 2016; Thomas 2017), but the dynasty was not in danger for almost 200 years. Kings were murdered (Xerxes I in 465, crown prince Darius in 465, Xerxes II in 423, Artaxerxes III in 338, Arses in 338) and there were rebellions in Egypt (Ruzicka 2012) and Babylonia (Rollinger 1998b; Waerzeggers 2003/2004; Henkelman et al. 2011) as well as a short period of civil strife when Artaxerxes II was challenged by his younger brother Cyrus in 401 (Lee 2016), but opposition against the reigning king mainly arose from within the royal lineage itself. In the end, the newly established empire of Darius I remained stable for two centuries.

NOTE

- 1 But since Adasi, founder of Assyrian kingship, is called “son of a nobody” in the Assyrian Kinglist (Waters 1998), one could also interpret Nabopolassar’s self-presentation as an adaptation of an Assyrian concept.

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- Rollinger, R. (2014c). Thinking and writing about history in Teispid and Achaemenid Persia. In K. Raaflaub (ed.), *Thinking, Recording, and Writing History in the Ancient World*. Malden/Oxford/Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, pp. 187–212. Offers useful information on ideology, strategies of legitimation, and “history-making” of the ancient Near Eastern empires.
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CHAPTER 28

Elamite Traditions

Javier Álvarez-Mon

Introduction: The Elamite Foundations of the Persian Empire

Almost a century ago one of the foremost authorities on Greek and Iranian history M.I. Rostovtzeff (1926: p. 125) suggested: “The Median kingdom was conquered by Cyrus, the fifth king of the Persian tribe, which had probably been long connected with Elam and had inherited from that source its civilization and capacity for political development.” In a similar vein the renowned archeologist and Iranologist W. Hinz (1972: p. 178) stated: “When Elam was incorporated into the Achaemenid Empire in 538, the Persians inherited its art and civilization. For some time before this, they had profited from an Elamite education; they had been countrymen and neighbors on their eastern border since about 695.” The likelihood that the genesis and key characteristics of the Persian Empire should be linked in time and space to the older Elamite civilization presented a model of continuity that, at the time, could not be substantiated by archeological evidence. Additionally, these specialists faced deeply entrenched scholarly attitudes that had prevented the recognition of continuity between Elam and Persia. Particularly influential was the privileging of classical sources – apparently unaware that the land where the Iranian-speaking ancestors of the Persians settled had been home to an ancient civilization – coupled with the belief that the Elamite kingdom ended or was broken up by the Assyrian incursion of 647 BCE. In recent years an

improved understanding of the Neo-Elamite period (c. 1000–525 BCE) has led increasing numbers of scholars to embrace the thesis of continuity between Elamite traditions and Persia. For D.T. Potts (1999: pp. 306–307): “the Achaemenid empire, however ‘Persian’ it may have been, in one sense evolved from the Neo-Elamite social, cultural, linguistic, and perhaps even political milieu.” Indeed, the notion that Elam played a major role in the genesis of the Persian ethnos and the formation of a complex state in Fars has been straightforwardly summarized by M. Liverani (2003: p. 10): “Persia is the heir of Elam, not of Media” (see Álvarez-Mon et al. 2011: p. 8, n. 26). This model of continuity highlights a phenomenon of contact, coexistence, and acculturation between Iranian and Elamite populations that culminated in the “Persian ethno-genesis” (Miroschedji 1985: p. 295). Expressed in simplistic formulaic terms, the scholarly community is invited to consider a new historical paradigm, namely: Elamites + Iranians = Persians. The present analysis does not attempt to offer an exhaustive review of all evidence, related scholarly discussions, and theoretical positions regarding the nature of the “ethno-genesis” phenomenon and possible models of acculturation. Instead, it seeks to offer a synthesis and new insights into aspects of the religious and artistic Elamite legacy of Persia. I will begin by outlining the urban landscape during the seventh and beginning of the sixth centuries BCE, which in many ways provides the historical framework for the ensuing discussions.

Urban Landscape: Textual and Archeological Evidence

The existence of Elam as a major political and cultural entity of the ancient Near East is deeply entrenched in the unique lowland/highland physical setting of the Iranian provinces of Khuzestan and Fars. This setting conditioned the material wealth, cultural resiliency, and longevity of the Elamite civilization. Throughout the centuries, however, its territorial and sociopolitical character underwent significant alterations, forcing reformulation of the identity and the notion of Elam. By the mid-seventh century BCE the inhabitants of southwestern Iran were embedded in landscapes bearing the marks of thousands of years of Elamite civilization defined by a legacy of settlements, agricultural and pastoral economies, communication networks, and natural and artificial religious landmarks. According to Ashurbanipal’s account of his 647 BCE Elamite campaign which reached the eastern boundary of the district of the city of Hunir/Huhnur (next to present-day Ram Hormuz), the lowland included no fewer than 14 royal residencies, 12 districts, and countless small towns. The highlight of his campaign was the infamous looting and devastation of Susa. In 626 BCE the Babylonian king Nabopolassar mentions returning

“the gods of Susa,” implying the existence of a political authority at Susa and the restoration of its shrines. A half-century later, the Acropole texts (c. 575–525 BCE) indicate Susa had reemerged as the hub of a commercial and administrative network linking the Elamite palace with towns and groups of peoples located broadly in the present-day Khuzestan province. About 50 years later, the Persepolis tablets (509–493 BCE) reveal the existence of 20 supply stations located in towns and villages along the Royal Road in territories formerly associated with eastern Elam. These tablets outline a regional economic system that was managed from Persepolis and stretched west to east from Behbahan (or perhaps Ram Hormuz) to Niriz, i.e. a larger part of modern Fars.

Despite textual evidence for networks of settlement and centralized administration during the years 647 BCE, c. 550 BCE, and 500 BCE, precise locations for the many toponyms mentioned in the texts remain wanting (e.g. the Neo-Elamite royal cities of Madaktu and Hidalu) and those towns whose location seems to be secure (such as the old city of Huhnur, Tol-e Bormi near Ram Hormuz) have yet to be properly excavated. The Neo-Elamite period is scantily represented in the archeological record of Susa and, so far, excavations at Anšan (Tall-e Malyan) have failed to unveil any seventh and sixth century BCE remains. Lowland Susa (c. 80 m above sea level) is a typical Near Eastern multilayered tell reaching 38 m high and follows vernacular agglutinative “urban planning” principles. In comparison, highland Anšan (c. 1600 m above sea level) is a heavily eroded tell (the highest ground reaching 8–10 m) marked by a massive mudbrick wall enclosing more than 200 ha of land. The former eastern Elamite capital of Anšan is mentioned in the Assyrian Annals as a key participant in the Elamite-led coalition against Sennacherib in 691 BCE. It also played a prominent role as the nominal ancestral kingdom of Cyrus the Great and his forebears, and, judging by the Persepolis tablets, was inhabited at the time of Darius.

The above summary highlights the gap between textual and archeological evidence regarding the settlement composition of late Elam and early Persia during the seventh and sixth centuries BCE. Textual evidence from Susa (c. 550 BCE) and Persepolis (500 BCE) outlines the presence of administrative networks composed of towns and villages and institutional and economic centers. Conversely, the absence of occupation at Anšan (and Fars generally) from c. 900 BCE has been interpreted as reflecting a phenomenon of deurbanization instigated by the increasing influence of Iranian-speaking populations engaged in a pastoral nomadic way of life. It is apparent that additional survey and archeological work is required in order to reconcile this evidence. As it stands, we have to grapple with two, not incompatible, socioeconomic realities – sedentary and pastoral – while bearing in mind that the existence at this time (or earlier) of *nomadic* pastoral communities cannot be demonstrated (Potts 2010a).

Religious Heritage: Divinities, Highland Ceremonies, and Funerary Practices

Recent examinations of the Persepolis Fortification Archive by W.F.M. Henkelman demonstrate a richer and more complex landscape of Persian religion than previously envisaged. Underpinning these investigations is the notion that Elam contributed significantly to the ideological and practical infrastructure from which core Persian religious beliefs and practices emerged. Persian religion at the time of Darius is presently conceived to exhibit religious acculturation, in the words of Henkelman (2008: p. 59): “the heterogeneous unity of religious beliefs and cultic practices that emerged from long Elamite-Iranian coexistence and were considered as native by the inhabitants of Achaemenid Fars and its rulers.”

Elamite royal inscriptions illustrate the diverse personality and remarkable continuity of Elamite religion, which was dominated by divinities from the lowlands (Suso-Mesopotamian gods) and the highlands and plateau (sometimes called Anšanite gods). The early Persian religious pantheon as represented in the Persepolis Archive incorporated deities of Suso-Mesopotamian background (such as Adad and Nabu) and deities of Elamite “Anšanite” pedigree (such as Humban and Napiriša) with deities of Iranian origin (such as Ahura Mazda). The longevity of the god Humban is particularly exceptional. He joined the Elamite pantheon as a deity of highland-Awanite background attested in the treaty of Naram-Sin (2260–2223 BCE) and, judging by his prevalence in royal onomastics, was one of the most important Neo-Elamite gods. He is by far the most conspicuous god in the Archive and, like the lowland great god of Susa, Inšušinak, had the function of bestowing kingship (*kiten*) upon the ruler. In this regard, it has been proposed that Humban provides an important theological template for Ahura Mazda as king maker.

Within the Archive there are references to state-supported ritual offerings, which in terms of frequency and quantity of foodstuffs allocated appear to have occurred predominantly in the context of a ceremony known as *lan*, followed far behind by *šip*, *bašur*, and *šumar*. The most important ritual involving the king (or a representative) was a sacrificial communal banquet known by the Elamite term *šip*. It was enacted in fall and entailed the sacrifice and consumption of large numbers of slaughtered cattle and sheep/goats. Striking visual evidence of a ceremony that could be identified as *šip* is exhibited on Neo-Elamite monumental relief panels situated in the highland valley of Izeh/Malamir, which lies c. 850m above sea level and links the gateway urban center of Huhnur with the plateau.

Kul-e Farah is a ravine nested on the eastern side of the valley, marked by a seasonal creek bed and six Neo-Elamite bas-reliefs carved over the cliff face (KF I, IV, and V) and boulder faces (KF II, III, and VI). The most significant

reliefs in terms of the present discussion are the monumental KF IV, KF III, and relief KF I. Kul-e Farah IV (c. ninth to eighth centuries BCE) is a c. 18×6m composition exhibiting a communal feast presided over by a seated king surrounded by more than 140 standing participants partaking in the ritual consumption of a morsel of food, probably meat. Amongst the participants are rows of individuals wearing long or short garments, an orchestra, and bow-bearers. Most have a distinctive long, braided hairstyle. Kul-e Farah III (c. eighth to seventh centuries BCE) represents a procession with about 200 participants accompanied by flocks of rams and zebu. Heading the procession are four kneeling males with head caps supporting a large platform on which stands a large male figure (representing perhaps a king or a deity). Kul-e Farah I (c. seventh to sixth century BCE) depicts a large-scale individual identified by an inscription as Hanni, “prince” or “chief” (*kutur*) of Aiapir and vassal of the Elamite king Šutur-Nahhunte son of Indada, and two court officials (a weapon bearer labeled “Šutruru, the Master of the Palace” and a long-garment bearer). They face a trio of musicians as a zebu is butchered next to ram carcasses and a fire altar or censer (Álvarez-Mon 2013).

These highland ceremonies are intimately connected to the notion of place and natural landscape (Kul-e Farah and the Izeh/Malamir valley), group identity defined by distinctive physical features (most particularly, long braided hair), social structure, and prescribed order (hierarchical displays organized along registers), and custom and ritual (animal sacrifice, a communal meal, religious worship, and an altar or censer). All together: place, self-representation, hierarchy, communal ritual, and worship provide a nexus of identity markers defining a population, religious attributes, and sociopolitical ideology. Furthermore, the Neo-Elamite reliefs of Kul-e Farah offer significant artistic blueprints for Persian palatial and funerary sculptural arts (Álvarez-Mon 2019).

Of five places mentioned in the translated texts from the Persepolis Archive as locations hosting the Persian *šip* feast, three included royal plantations (*partetaš*). The better known is Pasargadae/Batrakataš, which also hosted *lan* sacrifices and *šumar* funerary sacrifices enacted at the tomb of Cyrus. The documented association of a (royal) tomb garden/plantation with the burials of Cyrus (at Pasargadae), Cambyzes (at Narezzaš/Niriz), and other members of the Persian nobility (e.g. at Dasht-e Gohar and probably at Buzpar) is echoed in Assyrian texts and Neo-Elamite archeological evidence. According to Assyrian accounts of the 647 BCE desecration of the royal Elamite burials from Susa by Ashurbanipal’s troops, the Elamite kings were buried in “sacred groves” (*busa*) situated in the religious heart of the city next to the Ziggurat and associated temples. Judging by the archeological evidence unearthed in the course of excavations at Susa by R. de Mecquenem and P. de Miroschedji, the *busa* may have included mudbrick vaulted funerary chambers, typical of the lowlands.

In contrast to the Elamite burials from Susa, the recently discovered elite burials from Arjan and Ram Hormuz (c. 600–550 BCE) are found in piedmont gateway areas linking the highlands with the lowlands. The Arjan tomb was located on the left bank of the Marun River and the Ram Hormuz burial on the left bank of the Ala River (the remains of Tol-e Bormi/ancient Huhnur are on the right bank). Both burials are rectangular chambers with stone-lined walls, and both contained bathtub-style bronze coffins and exceptionally luxurious grave goods.

It may be premature to further stress the significance of the differences between the lowland/mudbrick/urban setting of Susa's burials versus the piedmont/stone/riverside (apparently) isolated burials of Arjan and Ram Hormuz. At the same time, the burials from Arjan and Ram Hormuz offer a new captivating view of Neo-Elamite funerary traditions attested in piedmont areas (Wicks 2015, 2017). Both elite lowland and piedmont funerary traditions reveal continuity with the two elite burials containing bronze coffins excavated at Susa by J. de Morgan. The most prominent was unearthed in the former Elamite sacred quarter of the Susa Acropole and included a coffin (probably deposited inside a mudbrick chamber) containing precious jewelry with close parallels in the Ram Hormuz burial. The skeletal remains (and associated jewelry), presently dated to the fifth century BCE, were interpreted as belonging to a "Persian princess" (Wicks et al. 2018).

Artistic Heritage (i): Mudbrick Architecture and Vitreous Industries

A widespread opinion, largely based upon interpretation of comments made by Herodotus, asserts that the Persians were tribal (pastoralist nomadic) peoples whose culture lacked a tradition of monumental and sculptural arts. A redefinition of "the Persians" as peoples with a shared Elamite and Iranian heritage raises questions over the validity of this creed. In concrete terms it suggests that Persian monumental architecture was informed by *both* Elamite and Iranian traditions. Evidence of continuity between Elamite architecture and related decorative arts and those of the Persian palaces of Susa and Persepolis is observable in one of the main signatures of Persian art: the so-called Apadana or hypostyle hall.

Two different but complementary architectural traditions converge in this monumental building: one conversant with the use of mudbrick, the other with the use of (wooden and stone) columns. Appreciation of the crucial role that mudbrick played in the building of the Persian Apadana and related monumental architecture has been impeded by emphasis on the solid, visible parts of the archeological record. Indeed, earlier archeologists at Persepolis

struggled to determine whether the Persian Apadana had any walls; some reconstructed the palace as an openly exposed forest of columns, while others interpreted the interruption of the floor tiles as evidence that the hypostyle halls were hidden from the outside world by mudbrick walls. Revelation of the fundamental role and characteristics of the massive mudbrick walls enclosing the columned halls and the defensive mudbrick walls of Persepolis came about with the excavations by E. Schmidt (1934–1939) and careful studies and reconstruction by F. Krefter. It is at Susa, however, that parallels with Elamite mudbrick architecture and decorative arts can be best established; keeping in mind that these are not the only references and that outstanding mastery of mudbrick architecture and associated (wooden) columned halls is evident in the “Median” heartland at Tepe Nush-e Jan.

We still lack knowledge of almost every aspect of the layout of Elamite palaces. Despite this absence, archeological evidence from the Old Elamite (c. 1900–1500 BCE) monumental villa compounds in the Ville Royale (Chantier A, levels XV–XII) at Susa suggests that a central planning principle, which determined Elamite (monumental) secular architecture, was the association of an open courtyard with a long, rectangular, “reception” hall comprising the heart of the living quarters. The unity of this domestic layout takes a further conventional dimension at Elamite Susa with the addition of two pairs of pilasters positioned close to each end of the “reception” hall (*salle-aux-saillants*). The exact function of these pilasters is debated but in all probability they marked the end piers of a vaulted ceiling (which, judging by the thickness of the mudbrick walls forming the hall, might have supported a second floor).

Excluding the Apadana hall, the Persian palace of Darius at Susa follows traditional Elamite and Mesopotamian architectural layout. It is a mudbrick-built monumental complex organized around three main courtyards. The ceremonial and private living quarters ordered axially along the “western” courtyard (C1 or *court d'honneur*) retained palpable evidence of the “pilaster-hall plus courtyard” tradition. The most noteworthy examples are two consecutive massive pilaster halls (rooms 752 and 753) linking the courtyard to the “throne hall” (or royal chamber). In addition, situated along the southern wing of the palace is a sequence of five (?) compounds of living quarters organized along pilaster halls and open courtyards (e.g. room 1414). Finally, a sequence of two consecutive pilaster halls (rooms 358 and 357) connect the central courtyard with the Apadana (Ladiray 2010: pp. 208–221).

A similar planning principle is attested on a smaller scale at Persepolis in living quarters thought to have housed palace guards and artisans. This compound (E Complex) is situated to the east of the Treasury (between a 6 m wide avenue and the defensive mudbrick city wall). The partially excavated mudbrick buildings here include a “pilaster hall plus courtyard” (room 9; Schmidt 1953: p. 201, fig. 84). Finally, to the northeast (east of the “unfinished

gate”) there are two consecutive perpendicular monumental pilaster halls (it is uncertain whether they may originally have opened into courtyards). Several scholars have supported the opinion that Darius’ architects borrowed the monumental “pilaster hall plus courtyard” tradition from the late Neo-Babylonian palaces built by Nebuchadnezzar II (604–562 BCE; the *Südburg*, courts D and E; the *Hauptburg*, and the *Sommerpalast*); current reassessment of the archeological evidence, however, suggests they were additions made to the Babylonian palaces by the Persian kings (Gasche 2010).

A further characteristic of mudbrick architecture exhibiting Elamite influence is the addition of royal inscriptions on an undetermined number of mudbricks, glazed bricks, and tiles found in the palace of Darius at Susa. These inscriptions are formulaic in nature: most include Darius’ “signature” (name, titles, and his father’s name); some are more elaborated and state his piety and the special support of Ahura Mazda (DSI); and a few contain a remarkable statement which could refer to esthetic properties of the palace “*may it seem splendid to everyone* (who sees it)” (DSa). The original placement of these inscriptions is unknown. That some were on glazed bricks and tiles suggests they were probably exposed on visible sections of the palace’s walls (Lecoq 1997).

These inscriptions recall a well-attested Elamite tradition of (glazed and unglazed) mudbricks inscribed with royal building dedications to Elamite divinities (Malbran-Labat 1995; Potts 2010b). The most outstanding examples belong to series of baked bricks from Tchoga Zanbil by Untaş Napiriša (1340–1330 BCE) and from Susa by Šutruk Nahhunte I (1190–1150 BCE). In the holy city of Tchoga Zanbil a repetition of 662 hand-inscribed mudbricks was exhibited along the facade wall forming the base of the ziggurat. A unique example from Susa by Šutruk Nahhunte (inscription EKI 18) refers to the construction of the *hiyan/ian*, a monumental building dedicated to Inšušinak which incorporated a columned hall or portico (Vallat 1999). Indeed, numerous mudbrick column bases were found in the course of excavations conducted in the Susa Acropole, although no further information exists about their arrangement. The inscribed mudbricks from the palace of Darius at Susa reflect the adaptation of an Elamite “writing on the wall” tradition advertising the king’s agency and religious duty as *roi bâtisseur*. Both temple and palace mudbrick inscriptions convey an expression of royal agency materializing in the form of a wondrous monumental building.

Since the 1946 publications by H. Frankfort and G. Richter (see references), the trilingual foundation inscriptions left by Darius at Susa – of which we have three versions (DSf, DSz, and DSaa) – have been presented as evidence of the foreign contribution to Persian art. These inscriptions provide accounts of the workers from different satrapies participating in the construction of the palace. Varying interpretations of the “foundation chart” inscription DSf have

resulted in nuanced approaches regarding the extent to which these workers ought to be considered artists (in the sense of generating artistic blueprints otherwise absent from Persian tradition), artisans (in the sense of skilled labor), or general labor force. It is becoming increasingly apparent that the massive enterprise required for the building of Susa and Persepolis (and other Persian palaces) needs to be placed in the context of a Near Eastern literary tradition of royal building (and related royal inscriptions) together with the employment of a multiethnic (skilled and unskilled) *corvée* labor force for the menial tasks of state-supported projects as attested in texts from Babylon and Persepolis (Uchitel 1991; Henkelman and Kleber 2007).

The decorative program of the palace of Darius at Susa, and to a minor degree at Persepolis, was almost entirely dominated by the industry of molded mudbrick, and monochrome or polychrome siliceous bricks (using a mixture of sand and lime or chalk) assembled to form large compositional frieze reliefs. It has been estimated that only c. 13 000 – representing about 10% of the total bricks decorating the palace walls of Susa – were recovered. Articulated already in 1891 by M. Dieulafoy, recent scientific analysis has confirmed the colossal endeavor of a project requiring sophisticated levels of technology, specialized labor force, and great expenditure (Daucé 2010). Some of the imagery exhibited in the brick panels from Susa is replicated in stone at Persepolis, suggesting a cohesive monumental visual program which, in many ways, continued a well-established tradition in terms of expertise, materials, and iconography.

Siliceous (glazed or unglazed) bricks are a signature of Elamite art attested since the time of Šutruk Nahhunte I (1190–1150 BCE). This type of brick was also employed at Persepolis and, most startlingly, at Achaemenid Babylon where previously the bricks had been made of terracotta. Faience industry during the Neo-Elamite period is also characterized by wall panels with imagery made with a black outline glaze (used to delineate the contour of the design) and compartmentalized colored glaze. Persian siliceous brick panels use a similar technique, which has been compared to “*cloisonné*,” where the contours in relief were delineated with a dark, raised glaze forming compartmentalized spaces filled with colored glaze (Álvarez-Mon 2010).

Artistic Heritage (ii): New Discoveries

In Álvarez-Mon (2010) devoted to the analysis and interpretation of the artifacts found in 1982 inside the Arjan tomb, I noted artistic parallels between Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Elamite art. These correspondences were interpreted as the result of emulation of Assyrian elite art and its adaptation into Elamite artistic format and tastes. The sociopolitical context that fostered such a phenomenon of interaction is characterized by a sequence of events related to the

peace treaty between the Assyrian king Esarhaddon and the Elamite king Urtak in c. 674 BCE, the exile of the House of Urtak in Assyria (664–653 BCE), and the post-647 BCE destruction of Susa. Consequently, I proposed the existence of a period of Assyrian artistic (and political?) influence in western Elam which lasted until about 626 BCE.

The Arjan material has assumed further significance following the chance discovery in April 2007 of the Ram Hormuz burial, which enclosed two fragmentary “bathtub”-style bronze coffins occupied by the skeletal remains of females. The coffins held a sumptuous array of gold jewelry, including bracelets (some with animal terminals), pins (analogous to those found at Susa), pendants, rings, beads, and more than a thousand assorted bracteates. The bronze metalwork is represented by chalice-style vessels (identical to those found at Susa and Arjan), inkwell-style vessels, and five candelabras (one with three duck-head feet supporting a trio of elongated leaping bulls holding the central shaft of the candelabrum). Equally original are a small bronze figure of a lady balancing a vessel on her head and long-handled bronze and silver pans mounted with “mermaid” ladies with long fish tails, sophisticated hair-styles, bracelets, and flounced skirts. The burials also contained glazed vessels and ceramics, including large amphorae clearly associated with the Neo-Elamite II period assemblages encountered at Susa (Álvarez-Mon 2010).

Based on striking correspondences with objects found at Susa and Arjan, the Ram Hormuz burials ought to be dated to c. 600–550 BCE (or based on related inscriptions, perhaps as low as 539 BCE). Both Arjan and Ram Hormuz introduce a new chapter in our understanding of the genesis of Persian art. The luxurious characteristics of the materials together with the inscriptions advocate elite, if not royal, status for their occupants. The materials bridge the last manifestation of Elamite tradition (incorporating the legacy of Assyrian elite art) with key recognizable features of Persian art. This phenomenon can be readily observed in, for example, the tribute scene exhibited in the Arjan bowl (which links the Assyrian tribute scene with the tribute procession from Persepolis), the *couchant* bulls in the Arjan stand candelabrum (which perpetuate Elamite tradition and provide a prototype for the Persian Apadana bull capitals), the stylized representation of lion heads from the Arjan beaker and stand candelabrum (which also share analogies with Persian lion heads in both monumental and portable art), and the bracelets with animal terminals decorated with granulation from Ram Hormuz (similar to those found in the “Persian princess” burial at Susa). A prominent iconographic element of continuity is the lion-headed griffin, which features on the Arjan “ring” and later plays a privileged role in monumental architectural relief sculpture of the Achaemenid Empire. Far from being the manifestation of abrupt change or of a disintegrating culture, this artistic production suggests the revitalization of Elamite traditions in the late seventh and sixth centuries BCE and a historical nexus where the process of transference and continuity can actually be documented.

Concluding Remarks: The Legacy of Elam

If, as stated by many commentators, Fars became home to Iranian-speaking populations as early as c. 1000 BCE (or earlier), Elamite-Iranian acculturation may have lasted for many centuries and taken multiple forms. Salient political and social forces were at work during the first half of the millennium. Amongst the most relevant: an increasing presence of populations bearing Iranian names; the wars and peace treaty between Assyria and Elam; the looting and devastation of Susa and much of western Elam in 647 BCE; the Elamite “renaissance” period (c. 626–520 BCE); and the collapse of the Assyrian Empire in 612 BCE. These and other phenomena undoubtedly conditioned the stage on which cultural differences and similarities were negotiated, manipulated, emphasized, or suppressed, according to individual as well as group interests.

Much remains uncertain, but it is possible that after 694 BCE the city of Anšan, relatively sheltered from the upheavals of the west, enjoyed a substantial degree of political sovereignty which became cemented under the leadership of the House of Teispes: Cyrus the Great, “son of Cambyses, king of Anšan, grandson of Cyrus (Elamite Kuraš/-uš), king of Anšan, great-grandson of Teispes, king of Anšan” (Babylonian Cylinder, Lecoq 1997: p. 183, 7). Indeed, judging by the presence of Elamite and Iranian names amongst Cyrus the Great’s eminent ancestors, and the evidence for continuity witnessed in specific aspects of the Elamite religious and artistic heritage of Persia, it is tempting to believe that a shared Elamo-Iranian consciousness provided the fundamental building blocks for the genesis of the Persian Empire. The enormity of this proposition, the nature of the acculturation process, and the channels of religious and artistic transmission, however, are only beginning to be recognized and articulated, and, of necessity, are destined to be subject to careful scrutiny by the scholarly community.

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CHAPTER 29

The Great Conquests

Amélie Kuhrt

In the space of less than 30 years, between 550 and 522 BCE, Cyrus II and Cambyses II conquered a territory stretching from Central Asia to Egypt and the Aegean. With the exception of the Indus Valley (under Darius I in the 510s) and the short-lived extension of Persia power into the Balkans (c. 513–470s BCE), there were no later additions; nor (with the temporary exception of Egypt between 400 and 343 BCE) was control of the conquests lost until Alexander's invasion (334–323 BCE). How it was possible for the still tiny kingdom of Persia to command the military resources to achieve such rapid expansion remains unknown. In what follows, the sources available for tracing events will be considered first, followed by a brief sketch of the main events and a consideration of how the kings attempted to consolidate control in the newly acquired lands.

The Evidence

The major pieces of evidence available for reconstructing the history of Cyrus' and Cambyses' conquests are diverse and unevenly distributed in time and space. Of prime importance for Cyrus' chronology is a Babylonian chronicle ("Nabonidus Chronicle," Grayson 2000: no. 7; Glassner 2004: no. 26), compiled on the basis of neutral contemporary observations. It provides dates for his defeat of the Medes (550 BCE) and Babylonia (539 BCE); despite a general assumption, it does *not* provide a date for Cyrus' conquest of Lydia

(Cargill 1977; Rollinger 2008). There is also material to illustrate how the Babylonians accommodated themselves to their new ruler: most important is a foundation document from Babylon known as the Cyrus Cylinder, a paeon in praise of Cyrus (“Persian Verse Account”), and bricks from Uruk and Ur stamped with Cyrus’ name and title (Kuhrt 2007, ch. 3: nos. 21–23, with references; Finkel 2013). The exceptionally rich corpus of Babylonian documents allows insights into administrative structures, as well as showing that Cyrus died in August 530; the documents also permit us to trace developments in the region under Cambyses.

The bulk of approximately contemporary evidence for Cambyses comes from Egypt. Most important is the inscribed statue of Udjahorresnet, who moved from serving the Egyptian rulers to acting for the new Persian kings, a stele recording Cambyses’ orders for the burial of the sacred Apis bull, an inscribed sarcophagus for him, and an office seal (Posener 1936, nos. 1–4; Hodjache and Berlev 1977; see now Wasmuth 2020). A demotic ordinance (Spiegelberg 1914), preserved in a document from the Ptolemaic period, provides information on adjustments to temple incomes ordered by Cambyses, which were added to a digest of earlier laws drawn up under Darius I (Agut-Labordère 2009–2010). The date of his death, according to the Babylonian material, falls in or soon after April 522.

To this must be added later traditions contained in the Old Testament (Isaiah 40–55; Ezra, echoed in Josephus, *Antiquities* XI.1–18), a Babylonian historian (Berossus FGrH 680 F10a), a Babylonian pseudo-prophecy (Grayson 1975: pp. 24–37; Van der Spek 2003: pp. 420–424), and classical writers such as Herodotus, Ctesias’ *Persica* (FGrH 688 F1–44), Xenophon’s *Cyropaedia*, as well as the lyric poet Bacchylides (Maehler 1982/1997 F3). As the founder of the empire, there are many stories about Cyrus which paint a largely (although not totally) positive picture of his behavior. As his successor, whose reign ended in some turmoil (DB §11), later traditions about Cambyses are fewer and mostly hostile. In order to trace events, historians are forced to rely heavily on a critical evaluation of this later literary material, as the generally more dispassionate contemporary sources do not usually present a historical narrative.

History of Events

According to the most trustworthy information (Nabonidus Chronicle), the Median king Astyages attacked Cyrus of Persia (Anshan) in 550 BCE “for conquest.” However, his soldiers revolted, took him prisoner, and handed him over to Cyrus, who marched to the Median capital of Ecbatana and emptied it of its treasures. The bare bones of this account tally in outline with the

elaborate story of the Median king's treachery and despotism in Herodotus. Both he and Ctesias present the Medo-Persian conflict as a long drawn-out rebellion led by Cyrus against his Median overlord. That the confrontation is likely to have been longer than the concise chronicle entry conveys is indicated by an inscription from Sippar where the Babylonian king Nabonidus (Kuhrt 2007, ch. 3: no. 6, with references) seems to refer to a struggle between Persians and Medes already in 553. Although it has been usual to accept Herodotus' and Ctesias' image of Median overlordship of Persia, this is nowhere borne out by contemporary evidence (Rollinger 2010: pp. 77–81). It is, indeed, contradicted by the Cyrus Cylinder, where Cyrus states categorically that he is the fourth "great king, king of Anshan" in a direct line of descent. The classical stories of Cyrus' rise to kingship are echoes of the later legends woven around him, at home and abroad, as the heroic founder of empire (Kuhrt 2003). A variety of tales are told about Astyages' subsequent fate: All agree that Cyrus was intent on treating him generously, only the treachery of a eunuch brought about his death. The one divergent voice is Xenophon, in whose romantic portrayal of Cyrus, Astyages is his fond grandfather, not his adversary, and Cyrus receives the Median lands as his wife's dowry.

As the extent of the territory the Medes controlled is disputed, we do not know what exactly Cyrus gained by his victory, but the perception of later classical writers was that it led to a confrontation between the Persian king and Croesus of Lydia, with the latter cast as the foolhardy aggressor. Having breached the Halys river, seen as the frontier between Medes and Lydians, an inconclusive battle was fought at Pteria in Cappadocia, in the wake of which Croesus withdrew to his capital at Sardis and called on his allies (Egypt, Babylonia, and Sparta) to come to his aid. Cyrus is said to have taken advantage of this delay, pursuing Croesus and laying successful siege to the city. After its fall, Cyrus is presented as trying unsuccessfully to execute Croesus but forced to spare him ultimately and treating him well. Arrangements for consolidating the conquest included the appointment of a Persian governor, as well as a local Lydian in charge of finance (who rebelled), and appointing commanders to subjugate the coastal regions, which was achieved with extreme brutality. The picture of Cyrus merely responding to unprovoked aggression should be taken with a pinch of salt: Before the battle against Croesus, he attempted to foment revolt amongst the coastal centers subject to Lydia. In Ctesias' account, Cyrus brought along Scythian allies from Central Asia, which suggests considerable preparation. Against the image of Cyrus' kind treatment of Croesus must be set reports of his initial plan to burn him (shown on an early fifth century BCE Attic vase), the execution of his son, Bacchylides' poem which may suggest that Croesus and his family did not survive, and the extreme measures deployed by his commanders to consolidate control.

Unfortunately, the chronology of the Lydian campaign is uncertain, and the classical writers present the sequence of events variously. In the absence of certainty, scholars have usually followed Herodotus' scheme in placing the Lydian campaign before Cyrus' attack on Babylonia, but this may mask more complex realities. There are hints in some fragmentary lines of the Nabonidus Chronicle that the Persian conquest of Babylonia in 539 BCE was preceded by clashes and growing tension between the two sides (von Voigtlander 1963: pp. 194–195). The last preserved lines of the chronicle, combined with a Babylonian document (Strassmaier 1890, *Cyr.* 10), allow the following reconstruction of Babylon's fall. In October 539 BCE, the Persian army advanced on the country along the Diyala route as far as Opis on the Tigris, where they were met by Nabonidus and his troops, who were defeated in battle. After capturing the city and putting many of its inhabitants to the sword, Cyrus moved to the Euphrates, where he took Sippar (October 10th). Nabonidus and his forces fell back to the plain north of Babylon, in order to defend the city. Cyrus dispatched a small contingent under his commander Ug/Gubaru to attack Babylon. Heavy fighting took place around the Enlil Gate which gave access to the city from the north, indicated by the substantial damage it suffered (Tolini 2005). The Persians succeeded in entering (October 12th), captured Nabonidus, who had tried to return, and Gubaru disposed heavily armed guards to protect the city against insurgents. With relative peace established, Cyrus formally entered Babylon on October 29th, was invested as king (Kessler 2002), and ceremonially greeted the inhabitants. Gubaru was appointed governor but died a few days later. In the course of the New Year Festival (March–April 538 BCE), Cambyses was temporarily installed as Babylonian king under the supervision of his father. The arrangement lasted no longer than one year and is thought to have been little more than an interim solution during Cyrus' absence. Overall control of the country remained for the next few years in the hands of Nabu-ahhe-bullit, governor (*šakin māti*) under Nabonidus.

In 535 BCE, another Gubaru was appointed governor with quasi-royal powers and extensive staff of the newly-created province of "Babylon and Beyond-the-River (area west of the Euphrates)," a post he retained until 525 BCE (Tolini 2011: pp. 26–29). While it is usual to stress the continuities in Babylonian administration, society, and cult, recent work draws attention to the rapid refocusing of routes and royal ceremonies on Iran, to drive home the point that this is where the center of the empire now lay (Tolini 2011: ch. 1). The fate of the defeated Babylonian king, according to later writers (pseudo-prophecy, Berossus), was to receive the income of an estate enabling him to live at the Persian court (Briant 1985).

Least known of Cyrus' actions is his campaigning in the east, beyond western Iran. The problem again is our lack of knowledge of the territory

controlled, or claimed, by the Medes, and the absence of solid documentation. Both Herodotus and Ctesias associate Cyrus' death with battles against nomadic groups in the northern part of Central Asia – Massagetae, according to Herodotus, Derbicae in Ctesias. The former uses the setting to make a didactic point about the limits of ambition and empire, while in the latter it forms part of a heroic tale. Getting beyond this to any certainties is virtually impossible. What is clear is that in 522/1 BCE the whole of central and eastern Iran, Afghanistan, and parts of Turkmenistan were under Persian control, with governors in position. No stories associate Cambyses with campaigning in the east, which suggests that the region's administration had been set up under Cyrus.

The lightning speed of Cyrus' campaigns, criss-crossing thousands of kilometers in 20 years, meant that many areas were barely touched. We hear nothing of the mountainous regions of Armenia and Cappadocia, for example (see Rollinger 2008, for a suggestion). While the Cyrus Cylinder refers rhetorically to homage received from Babylonia's provincial subjects, it is unlikely that Cyrus' conquest of Babylonia was immediately followed by the surrender of all the regions that had been provinces of the Neo-Babylonian Empire. But the sources available reveal nothing about any Persian action in the extensive regions to the north and west of Babylonia. Despite the Jewish tradition, crediting Cyrus with permission to resettle Jerusalem and build its temple, the precise chronology of that event is so uncertain that it cannot be used to connect it with Persian actions to consolidate control in the Levant (Briant 2002: pp. 44–49). Moreover, at the time of Darius I's seizure of the throne (522–521 BCE), there is good reason to suppose that parts of Elam remained to be incorporated into the empire (Waters 2000: pp. 85–87).

For reconstructing the invasion of Egypt, the one remaining major state, we are virtually entirely dependent on Herodotus (Ctesias' account is generally too distorted for use, Lenfant 2004: LXX, n. 268). Cyrus' successor, Cambyses, inherited an immense territory, only very recently acquired, so that Persian power was fragile. It was essential to act swiftly and decisively in order to retain control. The coastal regions of the Levant and Aegean, in particular, were vulnerable. Egypt's king, Amasis (570–526 BCE), was allied with Polycrates, the ambitious tyrant of the island of Samos close to the Anatolian coast (Carty 2015), and the Egyptian ruler had strengthened his naval power by the conquest of Cyprus, possibly soon after Cyrus' conquest of the Babylonian Empire (Wallinga 1993). In this situation, it was imperative for the Persians to ensure they controlled the seaboard and create a naval force before trying to bring Egypt to heel.

Polycrates seems to have found himself in a precarious position quite early in Cambyses' reign: relations with Egypt broke down and the Persian authorities in western Turkey were on their guard against him. He tried to protect

himself by sending ships to swell Persia's naval forces, but was nevertheless eventually executed by Oroites, satrap of Lydia. Herodotus' many references to Samian opposition to Polycrates' rule suggest that the Persian governor exploited such internal dissensions to bring about Polycrates' downfall and so root Achaemenid power more firmly along the western coastline.

At what point the Phoenician cities, followed by Cyprus, with their large fleets surrendered to Persia is uncertain. But one result was that in the wake of the collapse of the Samian alliance, it left Egypt isolated and seriously reduced its naval strength in the east Mediterranean, while the Persians were able to develop their own navy for the move against Egypt (Wallinga 1993). Simultaneously, they made use of strategic information provided by Egyptian deserters and negotiated an agreement with the Arabs, which was crucial to the logistics (water supplies and routes) of getting an army across the Sinai desert (Eph'al 1982). Amasis' death a few months before the invasion also worked to their advantage. His successor, Psammetichus III, was still trying to establish a firm hold on the throne, which his father had usurped, when he had to face the Persian invasion.¹

For the Persian conquest of Egypt, Herodotus provides a basic, not at all improbable framework, into which he has woven a series of moralizing stories. If these are set aside (Lloyd 1988), then it is possible to disengage a fairly convincing course for events: the Persians defeated the Egyptian army at Pelusium in the Eastern Delta; the successful Persian siege of Memphis was followed by the surrender of Cyrene and Barca in Libya, as their fortunes were closely linked with those of Egypt; Cambyses then initiated campaigns to the south (the Nubian kingdom) and west (Siwa oasis) in order to consolidate the Persian hold on Egypt's frontiers, moves that mirror the policies of his Saite predecessors. According to Herodotus, both campaigns were disasters. But two later writers (Diodorus and Strabo) and archeological evidence (Heidorn 1991) suggest that the moves to impose Persian control along Egypt's borders and establish control of essential routes in these areas were broadly successful.

The only Egyptian document that refers to Cambyses' conquest is the statue commemorating the life of Udjahorresnet, who had been an official in the regime of Amasis and Psammetichus III. There are oblique hints to the disruption caused by the Persian conquest, suggesting that members of the invading force infringed the sacred space of the Neith temple at Sais; according to Udjahorresnet, they were removed at his request. An obscure, repeated reference to "disaster"/"commotion" reads:

I saved (the city's) people from the very great disaster, which befell in the entire land. There was not its like in this land. (Posener 1936: pp. 18–21, ll. 33–35; 40–41).

Is this a description of the effects of the Persian war? Or does its position in the recital of conventional pious acts and civic virtues normally evoked in commemorative autobiographies of this type mean that it is wrong to assign it such a specific meaning? Commentators differ (e.g. Posener 1936: p. 169; Lloyd 1982a). Whatever the case, the fact remains that Udjahorresnet transferred his loyalty to Cambyses (and later Darius I), and prided himself on serving *all* rulers of Egypt with equal distinction. But his position within Egypt's government changed: From a prominent position in the royal administration, he served as a scholar under the Persians, although he was honored as shown by his tomb at Abusir (Bareš 1999), and his later cult (Anthes 1965: pp. 98–101). Besides Cambyses' reordering of temple incomes, and a level of bureaucratic continuity indicated by the reused seal and a text rehearsing the long history of a dispute (Vittmann 1998), the arrangements made for Egypt's government are not clear. Cambyses spent the rest of his reign in the country (three or nearly four years, depending on which chronology is adopted) in order to ensure Persia's hold. Stories about the treatment of the defeated Egyptian ruler diverge: According to Herodotus, he was executed after trying to foment a revolt, while Ctesias says that he was taken prisoner and deported, along with 6000 fellow Egyptians, to the Persian homeland.

Reception and Accommodation

Both Babylonia and Egypt offer insights into the elements deployed by Cyrus and Cambyses to rally support from local élites and accommodate themselves to the demands of age-old traditions. The Cyrus Cylinder, commemorating building work in Babylon,² the Verse Account, the bricks, and the Chronicle present Cyrus as a restorer of order and supporter of Babylonian cults, and integrate him into the sequence of legitimate, pious kings. Similarly, Cambyses is presented by Udjahorresnet as transformed into an Egyptian pharaoh, and, along with the evidence of the Apis stele and sarcophagus, as actively taking up the cultic duties associated with that office and receiving Egyptian titles. Such accommodations were the result of negotiations with local representatives, as suggested by the delay in Cyrus' entry into Babylon, the personal appeals to Cambyses described by Udjahorresnet, and what appears to have been a delay in the former's selection of the new Apis bull (Briant 2002: pp. 887–888). Also notable is the fact that both kings vilified their immediate predecessors: Nabonidus, like Amasis, had seized the throne by force. In Cyrus' case, every effort seems to have been made to link him to earlier, famous rulers such as Nebuchadnezzar II and Assurbanipal, who had carried out extensive, particularly pious, construction work. For Cambyses, we have stories in Herodotus and Ctesias that relate him directly to Apries (589–570

BCE), overthrown by Amasis: In these he emerges as either Apries' grandson or husband to his daughter, hence bent on vengeance, further illustrated by the story of his public, ceremonial annihilation of Amasis' mummy. It also turns him partly into an Egyptian (Lloyd 1982b). In both instances, the invaders could thus legitimate their rule by presenting it as a return to an earlier proper order instead of the social and political disruption it was.³

This disruption, hidden behind a surface continuity, is reflected in the refocusing of power and resources in the Persian homeland. Local notables, such as members of the Babylonian Egibi family and Udjahorresnet, had to present themselves at royal courts in Iran (Tolini 2011: pp. 19–20; Posener 1936, no. 1, l.43); Babylonian laborers were called up for construction work there (Henkelman and Kleber 2007). A striking illustration is the foundation of the dynastic center of Pasargadae in Fars, where decoration and building techniques indicate the use made by the conquerors of the conquered (Nylander 1970; Root 1979).

NOTES

- 1 It is usual to date the Persian invasion to 525 BCE, but Quack (2011) has put forward strong arguments in favor of placing it in 526 BCE.
- 2 Two tablets with extracts from the Cylinder in the British Museum suggest that the text of this foundation document circulated.
- 3 Note the traditions in Herodotus and Xenophon that Cyrus was the Median king's grandson, while in Ctesias he marries his predecessor's wife and honors Astyages as "a father."

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SECTION IV.B

**FROM GAUMĀTA
TO ALEXANDER**

CHAPTER 30

Imperial Crisis

Gundula Schwinghammer

Sources

In trying to form an opinion about what really happened in connection with Darius' accession to power – the sequence of the events, their causes and effects – it is important first to examine and evaluate the extant sources.

In the form of the Bīsūtūn monument there exists a first-hand contemporary account which Darius himself had made public after his rise to power and in which he gave his version of the events after the death of his predecessor. The rock relief and the accompanying inscriptions are located in the northwest Iranian province of Kermanshah. The inscription is trilingual – it is written in Old Persian, Babylonian, and Elamite – and is also illustrated (see Trümpelmann 1967). The relief shows Darius with his foot on a conquered enemy. This figure represents the magus Smerdis, but he is called Gaumāta here because, as noted in the inscriptions, the magus Gaumāta had fraudulently claimed to be King Cambyses' brother Smerdis and had seized power. Facing Darius are nine men tied together with a rope around their necks and their hands tied behind their backs. These are the rebels – the so-called “liar kings” – defeated by Darius in several battles.

Classical sources also dealt with the story of Darius' accession to power and thus with the catalyst of the imperial crisis. An important source is the narration of the events in Herodotus' “Histories”: One of the central figures in that account is Smerdis. He first encounters the reader in connection with his

brother Cambyses, the king, whom he accompanied to Egypt. The “Histories” also relate that Cambyses suspected his brother of aspiring to the kingship. Therefore he sent Smerdis back to Persia in order to have him secretly killed by Prexaspes, the close confidant of the king. However, this was not the end of the story because Smerdis – or a person impersonating him under that name – seemingly reappeared. Herodotus relates that the magus Patizeithes, who had been entrusted by Cambyses with the administration, had learned about the murder. Since he had a brother who not only looked like Smerdis but also bore the same name, Patizeithes proclaimed him as king. When Cambyses heard about this, he made sure that his order to assassinate Smerdis had been executed, and set out for Susa. On the journey he had an accident resulting in serious injury and died. The result was that the magus Smerdis, who profited from Cambyses’ as well as from the real Smerdis’ deaths, held power for seven months (Herodotus, 3.61–67).

Otanes, a Persian noble, became suspicious, and after the suspicions were substantiated, he took six other noble Persians into his confidence. Darius was one of them (Hdt. 3.68–70). He managed to persuade his co-conspirators to take immediate action, whereupon the conspirators implemented their plan. They infiltrated the palace and Darius killed the false Smerdis (Hdt. 3.71–79).

But Herodotus’ version is not the only one. The events had been taken up also by Aeschylus (see Högemann 1992: pp. 44–46), Justin (see Kuhrt 2007: p. 165), Ctesias (see Högemann 1992: p. 64), and Xenophon (see Högemann 1992: pp. 63–64).

In sum one may say that there exist two possibilities:

- 1) The official version, proclaimed by Darius, supported and complemented with many details by Herodotus, is the correct one. It implies that Cambyses had ordered his brother Smerdis to be secretly killed, and that a magus named Gaumāta, pretending to be Smerdis, in the absence of Cambyses assumed power. Cambyses died unexpectedly, leaving no offspring. Darius, intending to prevent the false Smerdis from becoming the legitimate successor of Cambyses, by intervention killed him, ascending himself to the throne.
- 2) The official version manipulates the truth, is a make-believe. The false Smerdis is an invention by Darius to motivate his usurpation. Darius in fact had killed the real Smerdis, the legitimate heir, who, after the untimely death of Cambyses, had taken power.

Darius’ rise to power, the question of whether or not he was an usurper, and the identity of Smerdis/Gaumāta have long been discussed in the scientific community, and the opinions in research diverge widely. Various arguments

are being used intended to demonstrate that Smerdis was in fact the brother of Cambyses and the true heir to the throne who was eliminated by the conspirators, and that the story about the fraudulent magus Smerdis had been invented by Darius for propagandistic reasons to legitimize his rule. Meanwhile, others maintain that Darius had told the truth when he claimed a magus had cheated all and seized power in an illegal manner. Already more than 100 years ago the scholars Paul Rost (1897: pp. 105–247) and Hugo Winckler (1898: pp. 38–45) offered the theory that Darius had not been telling the truth and that the story was invented by the Achaemenid king. This opinion had found little acceptance at first. But later voices grew more numerous, putting Darius' credibility in doubt. For an overview see Kipp (2001) with a compilation of arguments as to the credibility of Darius, *contra* (186–205) as well as *pro* (218–229).

The Triggering and the Course of the Crisis

Whichever version one is inclined to prefer, the undisputed fact remains that the result of the events was the accession of Darius to royal power, which in turn triggered numerous revolts throughout the empire. Table 30.1 provides a survey of these revolts which Darius had to put down in order to secure his power.

With the successful elimination of his predecessor in office and his accession to the throne Darius had taken an important step forward toward obtaining full power over the Achaemenid Empire. But his role was not yet secured by any means, demonstrated by the numerous uprisings which erupted everywhere and which meant a serious threat to himself as well as to the empire.

In what follows the unfolding of the crisis and Darius' reaction to it will be set out, the listing of the uprisings following the sequence described in the Bīsutūn inscriptions.

The first opponent Darius had to confront in order to safeguard his power was Āçina, who arose against him in Elam, the core region of Persia, calling himself – according to the Bīsutūn inscriptions – king of Elam (see Table 30.1). At first sight one might be tempted to think that this rebellion – happening in Elam, in the center of Persia – could be potentially dangerous to Darius' rule. But compared with the uprisings subsequently mentioned in the inscriptions, the one led by Āçina is set off from the others by two distinct features. Firstly, the text referring to Āçina does not mention any legitimation of his claim to power by way of descent from an earlier, rightful king. This is in contrast to the rebellions of Nadintabaira, Phraortes, Tritantaichmes, Vahyazdāta, and Araxa, because in their case Darius mentioned their claim to be of royal descent (see Table 30.1). Only in two other cases, with Martiya and Frāda, is a

Table 30.1 Name of the rebels, place of the revolt, the claimed title, and the “legitimation.”

Name of the “rebel” (spelling after Schmitt 2009)	Place of the revolt/claimed territory	Claim to power (title)	Legitimation
Gaumāta	Persia, Media and other lands (DBelam. § 10 and § 11 (ex 12) JA 1993: 43. DBop § 11 and § 12 Schmitt 2009: pp. 42–43 DBbab. § 11 and § 12 CII 1978: 55.)	King (DBelam. § 11 (ex 12) JA 1993: 43. DBop § 12 Schmitt 2009: p. 43. DBbab. § 12 CII 1978: 55.)	
Āçina	Elam (DBelam. § 15 (ex 16) JA 1993: 45. DBop § 16 Schmitt 2009: p. 47. DBbab. § 16 CII 1978: 55.)	King (DBelam. § 15 (ex 16) JA 1993: 45. DBop § 16 Schmitt 2009: p. 47. DBbab. § 16 CII 1978: 55.)	
Nadintabaira	Babylonia (DBelam. § 15 (ex 16) JA 1993: 45. DBop § 16 Schmitt 2009: pp. 47–48 DBbab. § 16 CII 1978: 55–56)	King (DBelam. § 15 (ex 16) JA 1993: 45. DBop § 16 Schmitt 2009: p. 48. DBbab. § 19 CII 1978: 56.). Here it must be drawn attention to a difference in the versions. Only in the Babylonian version he calls himself king.	Legitimation of sovereignty through Nabonidus: “...., the son of Nabū-na’id, king of Babylon.” (DBelam. § 15 (ex 16) JA 1993: 45. DBop § 16 Schmitt 2009: p. 48. DBbab. § 16 CII 1978: 56.)
Martiya	Elam (DBelam. § 21 (ex 22) JA 1993: 47. DBop § 22 Schmitt 2009: pp. 51–52 DBbab. § 22 CII 1978: 56.)	King (DBelam. § 21 (ex 22) JA 1993: 47. DBop § 22 Schmitt 2009: pp. 51–52 DBbab. § 22 CII 1978: 56.)	
Phraortes	Media (DBelam. § 22 (ex 24) JA 1993: 47. DBop § 24 Schmitt 2009: p. 52. DBbab. § 24 CII 1978: 56.)	King (DBelam. § 22 (ex 24) and § 25 (ex 31) JA 1993: 47 and 49. DBop § 24 and § 31 Schmitt 2009: pp. 53 and 59. DBbab. § 24 and § 31 CII 1978: 56 and 57.)	Legitimation of sovereignty through Cyaxares: “...., a descendant of Cyaxares.” (DBelam. § 22 (ex 24) JA 1993: 47. DBop § 24 Schmitt 2009: p. 52. DBbab. § 24 CII 1978: 56.)

Tritantaichmes	Sagartia (DBelam. § 26 (ex 33) JA 1993: 50. DBop § 33 Schmitt 2009: p. 61. DBbab. § 33 CII 1978: 58.)	King (DBelam. § 26 (ex 33) JA 1993: 50. DBop § 33 Schmitt 2009: p. 61. DBbab. § 33 CII 1978: 58.)	Legitimation of sovereignty through Cyaxares: “..., a descendant of Cyaxares.” (DBelam. § 26 (ex 33) JA 1993: 50. DBop § 33 Schmitt 2009: p. 61. DBbab. § 33 CII 1978: 58.)
Frāda	Margiana (DBelam. § 31 (ex 38) JA 1993: 51. DBop § 38 Schmitt 2009: p. 65. DBbab. § 38 CII 1978: 58.)	Leader/King (DBelam. § 31 (ex 38) JA 1993: 51. DBop § 38 Schmitt 2009: p. 65. DBbab. § 38 CII 1978: 58.)	
Vahyazdāta	Persia (DBelam. § 33 (ex 40) JA 1993: 51. DBop § 40 Schmitt 2009: p. 66. DBbab. § 40 CII 1978: 58–59)	King (DBelam. § 33 (ex 40) JA 1993: 51. DBop § 40 Schmitt 2009: p. 67. DBbab. § 40 CII 1978: 59.)	Legitimation of sovereignty through Cyrus: “..., the son of Cyrus.” (DBelam. § 33 (ex 40) JA 1993: 51. DBop § 40 Schmitt 2009: p. 66. DBbab. § 40 CII 1978: 59)
Araxa	Babylonia (DBelam. § 39 (ex 49) JA 1993: 54. DBop § 49 Schmitt 2009: pp. 72–73 DBbab. § 49 CII 1978: 60.)	King (DBelam. § 39 (ex 49) JA 1993: 54. DBop § 49 Schmitt 2009: p. 73. DBbab. § 49 CII 1978: 60.)	Legitimation of sovereignty through Nabonidus: “..., a son of Nabū-naʿid.” (DBelam. § 39 (ex 49) JA 1993: 54. DBop § 49 Schmitt 2009: p. 73. DBbab. § 49 CII 1978: 60.)

Note: JA 1993 = Grillot-Susini et al. 1993; CII 1978 = Von Voigtlander 1978.

genealogical legitimization lacking. The special circumstances of their cases will be dealt with later.

A further difference from the descriptions of the subsequent rebellions is evident in respect to the military activities involved on the part of Darius, or their lack. As regards the majority of the uprisings – those of Nadintabaira, Phraortes, Tritantaichmes, Frāda, Vahyazdāta, and Araxa – the military procedure by Darius was detailed in the Bīsutūn inscriptions, stressing the success of these operations of the Achaemenid king. In contrast to this, no military operation is mentioned in Ācina’s case, nor in that of Martiya. Only the following brief statement is found in the inscriptions: “Then I sent a messenger to Elam. They sent that Ācina, a prisoner, to me. I executed him” (DBelam. § 16 (ex 17) JA 1993: 45. DBop § 17 Schmitt 2009: p. 48. DBbab. § 17 CII 1978: p. 56). The most likely explanation as to why Darius did not mention any armed conflict is that any such had not taken place, and that other circumstances had caused the downfall of Ācina. If one believes the Bīsutūn inscriptions, no military intervention by Darius was necessary to regain control of Elam. The very brief mention of Ācina’s capture rather suggests a secret operation instead of an open military intervention. Even if we cannot be certain about the details it seems that this rebellion was put down without any great efforts on the part of Darius. If we speculate further it would appear that Ācina did not have not sufficient support in Elam, particularly not with the local nobility, and so did not really constitute any danger to Darius’ rule.

The situation is different in respect of the rebellion of Nadintabaira in Babylon. Its potential dangerousness results from the rebel’s particular claim. Nadintabaira named himself “I am Nebuchadnezzar, the son of Nabū-na’id” (see Table 30.1). Araxa, the last-mentioned “liar king” of the monument, also claims this descent (see Table 30.1). The importance of this statement of royal descent becomes clear if one considers it in the light of Lincoln’s remarks: “The patronym announced their project as one of restoration, since Nabonidus was Babylon’s last native king until defeated by Cyrus. The throne-name they chose also had its significance, recalling Nebuchadnezzar II, greatest ruler of the Neo-Babylonian era.” (Lincoln 2005: p. 174).

This claim to power by Nadintabaira makes it obvious that in this case Darius did not have to deal with a local uprising but was confronted with a threat of imperial dimensions. An aggravating factor was that Nadintabaira had been acknowledged one month before Gaumāta’s death as king of Babylon, as two documents from Kutha show (Nr. 48 and ASJ 19 1; Lorenz 2008: pp. 6 and 121–122). The situation resulting from all this motivates Darius, differently from with Ācina, to describe in detail the military operations which he undertook to deal with this adversary (DBelam. § 17 (ex 18) – § 19 (ex § 20) JA 1993: 45–46 DBop § 18 – § 20 Schmitt 2009: pp. 48–51. DBbab. § 18 – § 20 CII 1978: 56). It turns out, then, that in the case

of Nadintabaira, Darius had to deal with an opponent whom he had to regard as a serious threat to his own claim of power, even if in the end he could decide the military confrontation in his favor.

The rebellion, that of Martiya, again took place in Elam and presents a similar picture as in the case of the “liar king” Ācina. Considering the position of Elam, this uprising also could have endangered Darius’ power to a certain extent. But, as with Ācina, it subsided and in effect proved harmless. This becomes clear through several circumstances. Again in the Bīsutūn inscriptions there is no reference to a genealogically founded claim to power by the “liar king,” nor is there any mention of any military confrontations. Instead the case of Martiya is characterized by quite a different special circumstance which represents a singularity, because he was eliminated by his own followers. The Bīsutūn inscriptions give also the reason for their betrayal. It occurred because Darius just happened to be nearby with his force, and the rebels, terrified, rather than suffer military defeat and death surrendered by killing Martiya themselves (DBelam. § 21 (ex 23) JA 1993: 47. DBop § 23 Schmitt 2009: p. 52. DBbab. § 23 CII 1978: 56).

Following the text of the Bīsutūn inscriptions, the rebellion next to be put down by Darius was that of Phraortes, who proclaimed himself king of Media. As shown in Table 30.1, his legitimation was based on belonging to the generation of the heroic ancestor Cyaxares, as in the case of Tritantaichmes, who had proclaimed himself king of Sagartia and for this reason also belongs to the Median territory (Rollinger 2005: p. 22).

On account of the legitimation of the two “liar kings” and their situation within the Median territory, their uprisings shall be discussed together. Both Median rebels did not base their claim to power on dynastic reasons but through association with a heroic figure, Cyaxares. Their legitimation therefore was attempted by claiming membership of a gens which descended from a historical personality of western Iran who – it must be noted – was regarded as such but not as the actual founder of the empire (Rollinger 2005: p. 25). The special danger which these two rebellions signaled to Darius’ claim to power lies in the fact that the tribal confederation based on Cyaxares was not confined to Media alone (Rollinger 2005: p. 26), and that accordingly their claim transcended the Median core region. Thus the “liar kings” Phraortes and Tritantaichmes by their claims were challenging Darius’ reign in an extraordinarily dangerous manner. This assessment is confirmed also by the fact that in their case the respective uprisings were suppressed by military interventions mentioned in the inscriptions (DBelam. § 22 (ex 25) – § 26 (ex 33) JA 1993: 50. DBop § 25 – § 33 Schmitt 2009: pp. 53–62. DBbab. § 25 – § 33 CII 1978: 56–58).

The uprising of Frāda shows some remarkable characteristics which, on first sight, provide an ambiguous view of this rebellion. A seeming contradiction

exists in the fact that in his case no legitimation based on royal descent is reported, yet nevertheless there is mention of a military confrontation. In addition, Lincoln (2005) has pointed out other extraordinary features which characterize Frāda's rebellion. Lincoln first refers to the adscriptions joined to the portrayals in the Bīsutūn monument (DBb-DBj). Contrary to other "liar kings," the portrayal of Frāda lacks several important indications, such as his throne-name, his genealogy, or any connection with earlier royal lineage. So the text lacks any indication as to how Frāda wished to legitimize his claim to power. Also in other points he differs markedly from the other insurgents. Personally he does not present any claim. Apparently he was chosen by his countrymen, and in the Old Persian version he is called their leader (*maθišta*), not – as in the Elamite version – their king (*sunḫuk*). In the Babylonian version the text is damaged to the extent that the relevant passage is not legible (Lincoln 2005: p. 176, with note 12). From all this Lincoln concludes that Frāda apparently was considered a comparatively harmless opponent (Lincoln 2005: pp. 175–179). If one accepts this conclusion, then, judging by its potential danger to Darius' claim, Frāda's insurgence may be compared to those of Āçina and Martiya, although in Frāda's case military action was necessary in order to suppress it (DBelam. § 31 (ex 38) JA 1993: 51. DBop § 38 Schmitt 2009: pp. 65–66 DBbab. § 38 CII 1978: 58).

The last but one of the uprisings described in the Bīsutūn inscriptions is that of Vahyazdāta, who had proclaimed himself king of Persia and had thus tried to enforce his claim in the center of Darius' power. By this he challenged Darius in extraordinary fashion and thus represented an enormous danger to Darius' kingship, not only by claiming to be king of Persia but also by his legitimation, which he based on his claim to be the son of Cyrus: "I am Smerdis, the son of Cyrus" (see Table 30.1). In the words of Lincoln (2005: p. 173): "The two men who represented themselves as 'King' (Gaumāta and Vahyazdāta) thereby claimed the right to rule over the empire as a whole." Thus Vahyazdāta not only rose against Darius in part of the empire but by claiming the kingship of Persia he also put his claim to the empire as a whole, as the genealogy he adduced demonstrates. So it is not surprising that in the context of this "liar king's" rebellion, the military actions necessary to suppress it were described in detail in the monument (DBelam. § 34 (ex 41) – § 34 (ex 42) JA 1993: 51–2. DBop § 41 – § 42 Schmitt 2009: pp. 67–69. DBbab. § 41 – § 42 CII 1978: 59).

The last-mentioned rebellion is that of the "liar king" Araxa, who had proclaimed himself king of Babylonia. As in the case of Nadintabaira, who also rose up in Babylon and had presented the same genealogical legitimation, Araxa's rebellion presented a not inconsiderable momentum of danger toward Darius' maintenance of power. For this reason it is also not surprising that the military confrontation is given prominence in the inscriptions (DBelam. § 39

(ex 49) JA 1993: 54. DBop § 50 Schmitt 2009: pp. 73–74 DBbab. § 50 CII 1978: 60).

Finally, attention must be drawn to the fact that a further figure, that of the Saka Skunxa, was added later to the relief of the Bīsutūn monument (Nagel 1983: p. 184). But since Darius at the time of this rebellion was in full possession of his power, Skunxa represented no danger to his reign and therefore can pass as a comparatively ineffective opponent (Lincoln 2005: pp. 178–179).

Conclusion

Darius, though his accession to power provoked a dangerous crisis in the empire, not only managed to successfully overcome it but came out stronger than before. He secured his rule, under his dominion the empire enjoyed its maximal extension, and thus he is considered one of the greatest of Achaemenid kings.

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CHAPTER 31

The Establishment of the Achaemenid Empire: Darius I, Xerxes I, and Artaxerxes I

Robert Rollinger and Julian Degen

Sources and Perspectives

Our available sources about the first three Achaemenid kings are far from being consistent. The challenge of writing a history of the early Achaemenid Empire is based on the problem that mainly external sources need to be consulted to make basic statements. In fact, Greek authors provide us with the most comprehensive accounts, which are prone to contrast the Persian Empire with their own cultural milieu (cf. the collection of all relevant sources by Kuhrt 2007). These Greek sources, although labeled by modern historians as early examples of “historiography,” do not present accurate reports but highly biased “views” with a very specific focus on the Persian Empire and its kings. Furthermore, the so-called Persian Wars had a deep impact on the way Greeks (and later “Europeans”) conceptualized their past and their identities. Therefore, the modern historian has to distinguish carefully between “facts” and “interpretations.” Although modern historians tend to present their works as studied results of “*quellenkritik*” being capable to clearly discern between these different levels, this optimism is frequently not justified.

In addition, we have a wide variety of indigenous sources, whose treatment is also not without problems, since they develop specific perspectives. The Achaemenid royal inscriptions provide information about royal self-perception and the Persian conception of kingship (see Chapter 6 The Inscriptions of the Achaemenids). For Darius I, we have a considerable number of these texts,

which served as role models for his successors Xerxes I and Artaxerxes I. The royal inscriptions of the first three Achaemenids certainly need to be considered as products of a formative phase of experimenting with new strategies of legitimation, which mask historical narratives out (Rollinger 2014a: pp. 155–57; 2012a,b). Aside from the “view from above,” we can obtain information on administration, economic, and social aspects through a wide range of sources. Official sources such as the enormous number of Persepolis Fortification Tablets provide insight not only into administrative affairs of the empire (Jacobs et al. 2017; see Chapter 7 Elamite Sources) but also into the religious landscape of Persis (Henkelman 2008). In the same way, Aramaic parchments give an insight into the administration and social hierarchy of the satrapy of Egypt (see Chapter 9 Aramaic Sources). Meanwhile, cuneiform documents from various archives (Stopler 1985; Jursa 2005) lend themselves as sources to reconstruct a socioeconomic history of Babylonia under Persian rule (Kleber; 2008, 2017; Waerzeggers 2014; Heller 2010; Joannès 2020). Moreover, Persian affairs are one of the main issues of the books Ezra, Nehemia, and Esther of the Old Testament (see Chapter 10 Biblical Sources).

Indeed, the indigenous sources of the multiethnic and multicultural empire with their various perspectives provide insights into many aspects, but we still need to consult Greek sources to write a history of events of the Achaemenid Empire (cf. Dandamaev 1989; Briant 2002a).

War and Conquest: Darius I (522–486 BCE) and Xerxes I (486–465 BCE)

From a western perspective, the Persian Wars have always been the most prominent events not only in the reigns of Darius I and Xerxes I (and Artaxerxes I) but for the Persian Empire as a whole and for its history (Figure 31.1). This dominance was challenged only by Alexander’s campaign against Darius III and the downfall of the empire. Naturally, this perspective downgrades the empire to a peripheral phenomenon of the Greek (European) world; however, it is an essential one since alleged Greek peculiarity and European idiosyncrasy have always been regarded to have developed in a world-historical struggle between East and West. In the last decades, this perspective has partially eroded and Achaemenid Studies has evolved as a discipline in its own right, but still, at least in Ancient History and Classical Studies, the view of the Achaemenid Empire is generally dominated by discussing its defeats during the Persian Wars. This cannot be demonstrated only by the myriads of western publications on this topic but also by observing how these events are presented to a general public. The main source for the events and

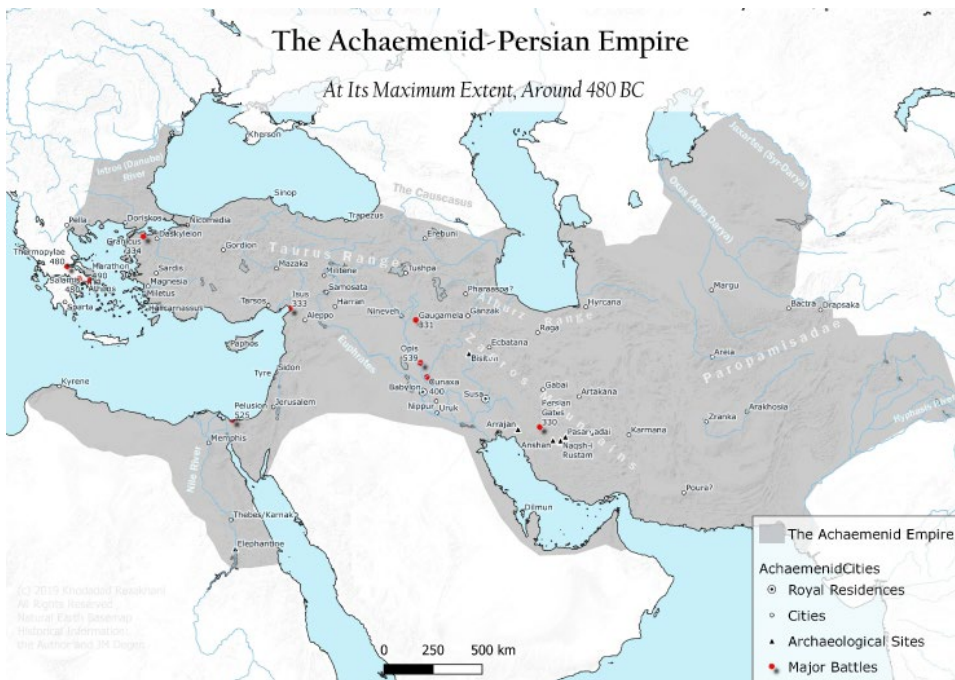


Figure 31.1 Map of the Achaemenid-Persian Empire at its maximum extent, around 480 BCE. Natural Earth Basemap (Historical Information: Khodadad Rezakhani and Julian Degen), reproduced by permission of Khodadad Rezakhani.

their chronology are Herodotus' *Histories*, published in the last third of the fifth century BCE (see Chapter 14 Greek and Latin Sources). Although it is generally acknowledged that the *Histories* are not a neutral report of facts, they are nevertheless taken as a trustworthy source for the general course of events. This is why modern representations of the Persian Wars are actually rationalized reproductions of Herodotus' account without raising serious doubts about the quality and perspective of the source. This approach becomes even more astonishing when we take into account the broader classical tradition on these wars that partially offers a considerable different course of events and chronology (Bichler 2016c). Even if one decides to dismiss these accounts as later fabrications, the problematic nature of the available sources remains a serious obstacle in reconstructing the events. This does not become better by referring to the fact that Persian sources remain silent about Darius' and Xerxes' campaigns in the west. This silence cannot be explained by arguing that the Persians refrained from telling anything about their defeats. We may just remember that this is also true for resounding Persian successes such as, for example, Cambyses' conquest of Egypt. It is highly probable that the Persian view of the events and their importance is entirely disproportional

compared with the Greek and western perspective. This later perspective is interwoven into a Greek master narrative that can be structured into three parts (for all details see Cawkwell 2005). Parts 1 and 2 pertain to the reigns of Darius I and the beginning of Xerxes' rule. They are primarily reported in great detail by Herodotus in his *Histories*. Part 3 belongs to the remaining reigns of Xerxes and his son Artaxerxes I. It is dealt with only cursorily by authors such as Thucydides, Ctesias, and others (Wiesehöfer et al. 2011; Wiesehöfer 2006; see Chapter 14 Greek and Latin Sources).

Part 1 can be described as the prehistory of the events that take place in the early years of Darius I. After the Achaemenid king has established his reign, he starts several campaigns at nearly all fringes of his empire that result not only in major conquests but also in serious setbacks. The Cyrenaica and the Indus valley are integrated into the empire (Giangiulio 2011; see Chapter 52 India), and Persian armies move for the first time from Asia to Europe and subdue Thrace and Macedonia, which become a Persian satrapy and a client kingdom respectively (Boteva 2011; Zahrnt 2011; Vasilev 2015). It is in these times that the Persian Empire also gains substantial influence beyond Macedonia and even Athens becomes a Persian vassal state (Waters 2016).

Herodotus delivers a detailed and miraculous report on Darius I's campaign against the European Scythians beyond the Danube that nearly ends in a catastrophe whereas in his Bisitun inscription Darius himself praises how he successfully subdued the Saka leader Skunkha and his tribe in central Asia. Whether there was only one or even more campaigns against the nomads of the Eurasian steppe whom the Greeks called Scythians and the Persians Sakā is not entirely clear (Tuplin 2010; Lanfranchi 2009–2011; Rollinger/Degen 2020).

The final episode of Part 1 starts with the Ionian Revolt, the first event that can be exactly dated: 500–494 BCE (see Chapter 45 The Greek World). If we follow Herodotus, the revolt was not triggered by the Ionians' general desire for liberty from the Persian yoke but by a maneuver of the tyrant of Miletus, Anaxagoras, to distract attention from his unsuccessful attempt to subdue the island of Naxos.¹ However, a coalition of Ionian city-states sacked and burned the city of Sardes, the center of Persian provincial administration. The consequences for the Ionians were dramatic. The Persians reconquered all lost territories and inflicted a major defeat on the Ionian coalition on land and at sea. Since Athens and Eretria had been in favor of the insurgents and provided assistance, the Persians prepared for punitive expeditions against these (disloyal) poleis. With these punitive expeditions, a perfect pretext for the conquest of further territories, Part 2 gains momentum.

A naval expedition in 492 BCE, led by Mardonius, harassed insubordinate islands in the central Aegean and appears to have been a mixture of intimidation, reconquest, and exploration. Thrace and Macedonia were reintegrated into the empire, although the fleet was heavily damaged by a storm on its way

back at Mount Athos. A major event took place two years later when again a Persian fleet appeared in the Aegean, this time led by the admirals Datis and Artaphernes. Naxos was subdued, but it became evident that the Persians could count on local allies in this area. This is at least true for Aegina, and at Delos the Persians sacrificed and payed reverence to Apollo. Before Persian troops eventually disembarked in Attica, the polis Eretria was sacked because of its involvement in the Ionian Revolt. The result was the famous battle of Marathon (490 BCE), a major victory of Athens and Plataeae that was celebrated accordingly, not only in the following decades (Bichler 2016b). Whether the Athenians defeated a Persian invading or exploring force may be debated. Be that as it may, Marathon became a highly charged place of memory in Athenian, Greek, and European history (Zahrnt 2010; Funke and Jung 2012).

Herodotus delivers the most detailed account of the great campaign that the Persians launched ten years later (481/79 BCE). The Persians approached with a huge army and navy, and the land troops were purportedly led by the Great King himself. The Athenians had not been inactive in the preceding decade but had launched an extensive shipbuilding program that transferred the city into the position of a major naval power. More than any events before, the following confrontations were apparently not a war between *the* Greeks and *the* Persians. The Achaemenid-Persian Empire was a multiethnic state, and there were considerable contingents of Greeks within their ranks. Athens and the leading power Sparta organized an Anti-Persian coalition ("The Hellenic League"); however, from the Thessalians in the north to the Thebans in Boeotia, Greeks fought on the side of the empire.² According to the Greek narrative, the empire approached like an avalanche with an inconceivable number of people and resources. This approach is embedded in a discourse of Persian hubris and neglect of divinely set borders. The Great King is presented as an Asian despot who treats his soldiers like slaves and who is characterized by unlimited blindness. His troops' crossing of the Hellespont on a ship's bridge and his canal-building project cutting the isthmus of Mount Athos are not taken as significant examples of Ancient Near Eastern technical know-how (Rollinger 2013) but as deeds of a tyrant who shoots far beyond the mark and loses sight of any proportion. Against such excessive power only an extraordinary heroic deed could demonstrate that at least morals and virtue were on the right side. Leonidas' and the Lacedaemonians' heroic death at Thermopylae have been, from a strategical point of view, entirely pointless and without any value but effective enough that even 2400 years later Hermann Göring could still refer to this event intending (in vain) to strengthen the stamina of the encircled Sixth Army at Stalingrad (Albertz 2006: pp. 293–307). Soon afterward, the troops of the empire conquered and sacked Athens. If Xerxes had in mind to launch a revenge campaign for the Ionians' sack of Sardes and to

execute penal sanctions on an insubordinate vassal state that had assisted the Ionians' revolt, this campaign already reached one of its major goals with the conquest of Athens. But this is not the perspective of our sources. Fighting continued, and with the lost naval battle of Salamis in the same year the empire suffered a substantial setback. After this, the Great King is said to have fled head over heels back to Asia, leaving his troops and their commander Mardonius alone deep in enemies' land. However, Salamis was not decisive enough to force the empire to retreat from Greece. To the contrary, Mardonius and his troops wintered in central Greece and sought the decision in the next year. In 479 BCE, the opponents met at Plataea for the final confrontation. The anti-Persian coalition was led by the Spartan king Pausanias, who, according to Greek tradition, inflicted a major defeat on the empire. Mardonius is said to have lost his life on the battlefield, and subsequently the empire had to give up all its positions in Greece and Macedonia as far as the Hellespont. It was in the wake of this success that Sparta pulled back (479/8 BCE) and Athens became the head of the so-called Delian League, an institution with members with originally equal rights. This new development marks the beginning of part 3 of the Persian Wars.

Indeed, the new Delian League ascribed to take revenge for the Persian invasion, to devastate the Great King's land, and to protect the liberty of the Greeks who had formerly been under the Persian yoke, but it soon became a vehicle of Athenian dominance and imperialism (Kehne 2014; Ruffing 2016). It started to intervene in western Asia Minor and beyond and celebrated a major victory over the empire in a combined land and sea battle at the river Eurymedon in Pamphylia around 465 BCE. With the death of Xerxes in August 465 BCE, fighting did not stop but continued until deep into the reign of Artaxerxes I when with the purported peace treaty of Callias (449/8 BCE) the conflict parties agreed to silence their weapons and to respect their spheres of interest (for the problems of reconstructing the events between the 460s BCE and the "Peace of Callias" in 449/8 BCE, see Kahn 2008: pp. 430–436).

Reviewing the evidence so far introduced it becomes apparent that the modern historian faces considerable problems in reconstructing the major events. There can be no doubt that Greek "historians" like Herodotus and others refer to real events as far as the basic structure of their reports is concerned. As the "Perserschutt" ("Persian debris") on the Acropolis impressively demonstrates, Athens was conquered and sacked. The same is true for the battle of Marathon, as the still-visible mounds erected on the spot for the Athenian dead warriors exhibit (at least the tumulus at Vrana appears to host the remains of the Plataians who were killed in action, cf. Mersch 1995). The run of the Greek herald Pheidippides from the battlefield to Athens is, however, already part of the rich production of legends that started immediately

after the events (with Hdt. 6.105–106 Pheidippides runs to Sparta!) (Kertész 1991). It is in these succeeding decades that our earliest sources emerge and poets like Aeschylus and Simonides of Ceos deal with specific events of the Persian Wars (see Chapter 97 The Perspectives of Greek and Latin Sources).

With Darius I and Xerxes, the Persian Empire heavily intervened in Aegean affairs and led its armies deep into mainland Greece. It is also apparent that this “expansion” did not result in an integration of these areas into the Persian Empire and that Xerxes’ campaign did not succeed in the end. However, we do not know anything about the Persians’ strategic intentions and further-reaching plans. This is also true for the course of each battle and its outcome, although modern reconstructions pretend to be sure to know any detail (Konijnendijk 2012; Bichler 2016a). The picture of the Great King remains a caricature of an Ancient Near Eastern monarch, although with considerable nuances. Already Aeschylus described Darius I differently from Xerxes, the latter becoming an “oriental” specter despot and temple destroyer (Wieschöfer 2017). We can also not be absolutely sure whether and how the Great King really participated in these wars. The descriptions of Xerxes sitting on his throne and watching the battle of Salamis from a distance looks much more like a reflection of the well-known royal iconography as it is testified on seals and reliefs (Wieschöfer 2020). Even the report on the death of Mardonius in the battle of Plataea might be fictitious if the noble Mardonius mentioned some years later in a Babylonian document by referring to his far-reaching estates is the general of the Persian Wars (Stolper 1992).

However, if we put the Persian Empire into the general framework of Ancient Near Eastern empires of the first millennium BCE we can draw some general conclusions that avoid the predominant Eurocentric perspective on the events. As with all empires in world history, expansion and conquest were much more difficult and time consuming when facing a strong and coherent coalition of smaller states in a politically fragmented landscape than when just subduing a neighboring and already well-organized monarchy. As it looks, Cyrus and Cambyses conquered huge areas in comparably short time as the subjection of Babylonia, Lydia, and Egypt demonstrates (see Chapter 27 From Assurbanipal to Cambyses, and Chapter 29 The Great Conquests). The same appears to be true with the submission of Thrace and Macedonia. Compared with this, the Neo-Assyrian advance into the Zagros mountains and beyond the river Euphrates was a much more time-consuming task that became a matter of long breath. It took the Assyrians about 100 years and dozens of campaigns to finally subdue the resisting and never-ending coalitions of Syrian city-states until the area was under firm Assyrian control. One campaign was by far not enough to reach this goal (Baggs 2011). Assyrian ambitions can be defined only in a very broad sense. They can be described generally as ways of submission and recognition of Assyrian supremacy. This is important because

there appears to have been no master plan that sought to establish direct Assyrian control over all conquered territories. Recognition was the key, a principle that corresponded with the Assyrian king's claim to rule the world. Therefore, indirect rule was an essential instrument to organize domination on the "peripheries" (Lanfranchi 2011). And there was always the possibility of a different perspective on the advance of the Assyrian superpower. What the Assyrian king might have understood as paying tribute and thus as submission may have been interpreted by a local power as unique gift exchange.

These general observations are also true for the Achaemenid Empire. It is astonishing how fast the city-states in western and southwestern Asia Minor were brought under Persian control, but the Lydian state had certainly done considerable preliminary work in this respect. Things became different when the Great King decided to subject the territories on the Greek mainland. Whatever the Athenians thought about the implications of their approach to the Great King in 507 BCE seeking the Persians' assistance against a possible Spartan invasion, in the eyes of the Great King they became vassals and their territory a part of the Persian Empire (Waters 2016). From a broader perspective, this is another example of how empires become involved in conflicts at their border zones as they are drawn into local conflicts that soon trigger action and counteraction. With the Athenian intervention in the Ionian Revolt the Greeks challenged the empire's self-conception. The intention to rebuke the Athenians for their "oath-breaking" for sure played a central role for the Persian campaigns, but at the same time this was a welcome pretext for further expansion in the framework of an ideology that defined the Great King as the unrivaled ruler of the world (Rollinger 2017). To recognize Persian supremacy by paying tribute was the primary objective and to reach this goal every effort was worth taking. Different modes of how to rule and organize control, "despotism" versus "democracy," did not play a role in this context. When the Persians thought that democratic rule was more beneficial for their goals they did not hesitate to remove tyrants and to install democracies in Ionian states (Hdt. 6.43.3). And that powerful Persian opponents like Sparta were not democracies is a truism but nevertheless worth recalling. The efforts the Great Kings took to enlarge their control in the west were extraordinary and surpassed everything we know from preceding Ancient Near Eastern empires. Perhaps ongoing expansionism had become a kind of automatism,³ but the military machine of the empire had to face exceptional challenges. There was the problem of long supply chains that had to be organized on land and at sea. Although the Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian empires had already started to invest in navies with a Mediterranean perspective (Schaudig 2008), these empires actually remained great land powers. In contrast, the Achaemenid Empire was the first Ancient Near Eastern superpower whose navy matched the importance of its land troops. This navy became a strategic

force of its own, and the Persian Wars, from the suppression of the Ionian Revolt onward, were the new battlefield of this instrument. The supply and transport of the troops was a tremendous logistical task, and the crossing of the Hellespont on a gigantic ship bridge was only the most spectacular (Rollinger 2013: pp. 67–73). The extremely long supply lines had one major consequence that had to be taken into consideration. To succeed, the enemy had to be defeated not only fast but also completely. An undecided battle was a lost battle. The longer the enemy was still active, the higher was the danger of being forced to retreat and give up the Great King's far-reaching goals. From this perspective, one may wonder whether the battle of Salamis was such a bitter defeat as the Greek sources want to make us believe (Ruffing 2006). The same is also true for Plataea (Konijnendijk 2012). As far as Salamis is concerned, the Persian troops did not retreat head over heels (only the Great King is purported to have done so). To the contrary, the Persians wintered in Thessaly. This is the first example in the history of Ancient Near Eastern empires, as far as we know, that their armies did not return home after an annual campaign but stayed on the “peripheries” to continue their advance in the next year. This does not look as if the Persians suffered serious setbacks in 480 BCE. But it is also clear that the empire sought the final decision in the next year. Whether Plataea was a major defeat or a battle with indecisive outcome, the result was the same. The empire did not reach its goals, and its troops had to retreat. For the defenders, this was a major victory that offered entirely new opportunities – opportunities Athens was fairly soon ready to grasp.⁴

A further consequence was that the western “periphery” of the empire collapsed, Macedonia and Thrace shook off Persian supremacy, and the expanding reach of the Athenian fleet set the empire's coastal regions of the entire Levant in danger. In the following decades, confrontations were not fought in the Aegean anymore but also in southern Asia Minor, Cyprus, and Egypt (see below). This was a major setback for the empire and probably a consequence of its exhaustive overstretch during the Persian Wars. However, the empire did never lose sight of its initial goals, and from an ideological perspective, the Great Kings may still have pretended to control the Aegean. This they did in fact many decades later when the Peloponnesian War offered an entire new opportunity to intervene, which the Great King did not hesitate to do. Skillfully he played off Sparta and Athens against each other until he regained full sovereignty over Western Asia Minor and Cyprus.

Focusing on the Persian Wars from a more general viewpoint these confrontations initiated a new period in the history of the Persian Empire. Ongoing expansion that started with the reign of Cyrus grinded to a halt. With Xerxes I (after 480/79 BCE) and Artaxerxes I, the empire began to concentrate more on how to maintain what had been conquered than on how to subdue further enemies. It is up to the modern historian how to qualify the efforts of

maintenance as compared with conquest. The Persian Empire was extremely successful in both. From Cyrus to Xerxes it conquered regions from modern Pakistan to Greece, from modern Bulgaria to Libya. From Xerxes to Darius III, that is for 150 years, it successfully maintained what Alexander's successors lost or quarreled over immediately after the "Great's" death.

Revolts

"Revolts" and "empire" can be regarded as nearly synonymous terms. All empires in world history faced local revolts and rebellions almost permanently in some parts of their huge territories. Thus, these revolts should per se not be taken as a symptom of weakness and decline (Gehler and Rollinger 2014; Collins and Manning 2016; Howe and Brice 2016). This also applies for the Persian Empire where revolts started to emerge with the reign of Darius I. The Ionian Revolt that also affected Cyprus is the most prominent one in the west. Since the Great King saw Athens as a Persian vassal, the Persian Wars can also be interpreted as a response to oath-breaking and rebellion (Waters 2016). Apart from this northwestern frontier zone there were other regions where revolts played a major role during the reigns of Darius and Xerxes, i.e. Egypt and Babylonia. It is probably not by chance that we encounter these uprisings in core zones of former independent kingdoms that had developed specific identities, customs, and probably also political consciousness. Egypt remained a trouble spot in the reign of Artaxerxes I (see below) and in the fourth century BCE (Rottpeter 2007; Vittmann 2011; Ruzicka 2012). There were further revolts in the Levant and Cyprus in the fifth and fourth centuries BCE but none of these was a serious threat for the empire (Wiesehöfer 2011: pp. 721–725; Wiesehöfer 2016). Whether a revolt in Bactria transpired in the reign of Xerxes is a matter of debate. Herodotus reports about preparations of such an uprising by Masistes, the local governor and brother of the Great King, but he and his sons are said to have been executed before they could engage in any rebellion (Hdt. 9.113).

As already mentioned, Egypt and Babylonia appear to have been somehow specific cases. These were not only former independent kingdoms but economically especially rich provinces. Taking the good documentation from the Abbasid Empire as a comparison, it is not too far to conclude that also in Achaemenid times Babylonia was the economically most potent region of the empire (Kennedy 2009). In each reign of Darius and Xerxes Babylonia two times faced two revolts. In the context of the general turmoil after the death of Cambyses that affected the empire as a whole, cuneiform documents as well as the Bisitun inscription attest the uprisings of a certain Nidintu-Bel (Nebuchadnezzar III) and Arakha (Nebuchadnezzar IV). Both consciously

chose the throne name Nebuchadnezzar to recall the great past of Babylonian history. Nidintu-Bel's rebellion was contemporaneous with the very beginning of Darius' reign (522/1 BCE), whereas Arakha rebelled one year later (521/0 BCE). Both rebels had a firm basis in northern Babylonia (Babylon, Borsippa, Sippar; Nidintu-Bel also in Kutha) but controlled also Uruk (Lorenz 2008: pp. 87–88; Bloch 2015). Both were only in charge for some months until Darius crushed each rebellion by force. A similar situation occurred in the second year of Xerxes (484 BCE) when cuneiform documents refer to two further uprisings following immediately one after the other. The two usurpers, who, again, only ruled for some months, did not recall the Babylonian past in the same way as their “predecessors” but chose distinctive throne names: Bel-šimanni and Šamaš-eriba. Once more, both rebellions concentrated on northern Babylonia (Rollinger 1998; Waerzeggers 2003–2004). This was the last time that Babylonia revolted in Persian times.

The context and “prehistory” of these revolts have been convincingly explored in the last decades. Although there were personal and administrative continuities between the Neo-Babylonian, Teispid and early Achaemenid regimes (Kleber 2017, 2019; Klinkott 2019), considerable changes appeared on the horizon that more and more affected the economic and social structures of Babylonia. On the one hand, tax pressure increased continuously that touched traditional elites as well as ordinary people. On the other hand, there was a significant and persistent increase in prices from the middle of the sixth century BCE that turned extraordinarily steep in Teispid and early Achaemenid times (Jursa and Schmidl 2017). The reasons for this development are complex. The huge building projects that started in Neo-Babylonian and continued in Persian times resulted in a huge influx of silver that was the source for price inflation.⁵ At the same time, substantial resources of manpower and staples were redirected to regions outside of Babylonia. Simultaneously, the climate was turning to a drier phase that led to times of famine and starving (Kleber 2012). From this perspective, it becomes evident that it was especially the traditional elites that increasingly felt the growing tax pressure and feared for their privileges and positions. It was this social group that mainly supported the uprisings. The counterstrike of the empire was dramatic, as especially testified by Xerxes' reply on the rebellion of 484 BCE. The traditional northern Babylonian elites lost their positions in the profitable temple administration. This is even true for northern Babylonians in Uruk, who disappear from our sources. This dramatic break, however, did not affect cult and temple building. Babylonian temples were neither destroyed nor laid in decay (Henkelman et al. 2011; Heinsch et al. 2011). But the administration of the land saw a major shift toward a more and more imperial and non-local superstructure that strived for an optimal utilization of Babylonia's rich resources. Nevertheless, the Persian kings still used the title “king of Babylon,” thus

stressing continuity (Rollinger 1999). Whether they participated themselves in the Babylonian New Year's festival is, however, a matter of debate.

The source situation in Egypt is not as good as in Babylonia, but what we learn appears to follow the same patterns (for details see Agut-Labordère 2017; Vittmann 2011; Ruzicka 2012: pp. 26–34). As in Babylonia, the regime change from Cambyses to Darius I witnessed “national” unrest. For reasons we do not know, however, the Egyptian uprising of Petubastis III (about 522–520 BCE) is not mentioned in the Bisitun inscription but only attested by Egyptian documents. As in Babylonia, it becomes evident that starting with Darius' reign at the latest, the Persians began to establish an administrative superstructure superimposed on an already existing Egyptian layer. We can only surmise that this reorganization of local affairs was also joined by a more systematic collection of taxes and that more and more resources were directed out of the country. For Darius I, as for Cambyses, it is apparent that he presented himself in Egypt as an Egyptian pharao. For Xerxes, this is still debated, although there are inscriptions on vases where he is addressed as “king of Upper and Lower Egypt, Lord of Both Lands,” or as “Pharao the Great” (Vittmann 2011: p. 394). When Xerxes seized the Persian throne in 486 BCE, there was a further uprising by a Psammetich IV (486/5 BCE) attested by only a handful of papyri. Together with a general remark of unrest in Asia, Herodotus has this revolt already started at the end of Darius' reign (Hdt. 7.1). When it was crushed by Xerxes' armies at the very beginning of his reign he notes that the new Persian king “laid Egypt under a much harder slavery than in the time of Darius” (Hdt. 7.7). Whether this is a reflection of the ever-increasing tax pressure, so well documented in Babylonia, may be considered. Xerxes installed his brother, Achaemenes, as new governor, and as in Babylonia after the revolts of Bel-šimanni and Šamaš-eriba, the country remained stable for the rest of Xerxes' reign. For Egypt, the situation changed again in the reign of Artaxerxes I. This event has to be seen in a larger context that includes Asia Minor, Cyprus, and the Levant.

War and (Re)Conquest: Artaxerxes I (465–424 BCE)

The third phase of the Graeco-Persian wars had a truly Mediterranean dimension for the circumstances of the time. Hitherto the conflict had taken place in the Aegean Sea, Hellas, Thrace, and Asia Minor, which soon after the retreat of the Persian army in 479 BCE had extended over the southeastern regions of the Mediterranean Sea. This extension was based on the shift of political structures in Hellas and the Aegean Sea after the 480s BCE. During Xerxes I's campaign against Hellas his troops had to face the Hellenic League,

which transformed in the 470s BCE for the ongoing conflict to an Athenian instrument of expansion. While Peloponnesian city-states and others avoided further conflicts with the Persians, the later Delian League took the place of the “Panhellenic venture” as a war party and began to vie with the Persians for supremacy in the Aegean Sea. This new Aegean power was led by Athens, which emerged from a formerly regional sway over Attica to leader of the Delian League. This first Aegean Empire was mainly a product of Persian-Greek conflicts and Athenian-Spartan rivalry and served as a tool for Athens’ far-reaching imperialistic interests in the Mediterranean Sea (Kehne 2014). In the meanwhile, Sparta extended its power over the vast parts of Peloponnesus but had no further ambitions to extend its sphere of influence outside the peninsula. Hence, the situation in Hellas worked to the Achaemenids’ advantage and the empire was up to play both ends against the middle because the former political fragmented landscape in Hellas changed to a superregional mélange of the two dominating players’ interests.

Nevertheless, the complexity of the different conflicts between the Delian League, the Peloponnesian League, and the Achaemenid Empire is hard to overlook. Difficulties in reconstructing the general chronology of the third phase of the Graeco-Persian wars are on the one hand the lack of a general master narrative on Persian-Greek relations after Xerxes I’s campaign and on the other the contradicting accounts of our available sources. Herodotus’ account as our main source for both first parts of the Graeco-Persian wars goes a long chronological way up to the reign of Artaxerxes I and connects past events with the author’s own time. Thus, his work also contains important information about the Graeco-Persian relations after 479 BCE. Problems are caused by the difficult dating of the *Histories* (Irwin 2013, 2017) as well as Herodotus’ indirect criticism on imperialistic Athens through discussing contemporary Greek issues in a Persian disguise (Ruffing 2009, 2011). Apart from the *Histories* we need to consider other historical works as sources, such as those of Thucydides, Ctesias, Diodorus, and Plutarch. All these works are only providing more or less chronological guidelines for the modern historian, who is forced to work with contradictory accounts (for general problems: Libourel 1971: pp. 605–606; Kahn 2008: pp. 424–426; Briant 2002a: p. 579; Scharf 1955: pp. 308–318; Bichler 2016d). With the exception of a few documents in Aramaic and Babylonian language, the aforementioned sources provide only Greek perspectives of the conflict, whereas the Achaemenid Empire appears to be a silent giant.

It is distinctive for part 3 of the conflict that the Delian League was trying to stabilize its hegemony over the Aegean Sea by expelling the Persian land and naval troops out of Asia Minor’s coastal regions and by attempting to take over Cyprus. It was never Athens’ intention to bring to an end Persian rule over the Greeks in Asia Minor’s hinterland, as there was never an “iron

curtain” between areas controlled by Athens and the Persians (Whitby 1999; Briant and Descat 1998). Rather, its overarching imperialistic ambitions are at the fore, which are strategically related to Athens’ desire to seize plunder and thus justify the existence of the Delian League. Shortly after Xerxes I’s campaign, these circumstances caused campaigns against Persian troops in Thrace and in the region of the Hellespont. The Hellenic League’s troops were mainly responsible for successful campaigns up to Byzantium, but subsequent campaigns in harness were pursued no longer. This was why the Hellenic League’s supreme commander Pausanias was accused of having been bribed by the Persians. That caused contentions within the allies and ruled out further campaigns. From 479/8 onward, Athens began to exercise power over the islands in the Aegean Sea and the Greek cities in Asia Minor.

For that reason, the following two decades were characterized by the ascendancy of Athens as the leading power of the Delian League. Nearly all standard works for the Classical time refer to this period as an ascendancy of the Delian League and a deadlock of the Persian Empire (cf. Welwei 1999). A popular explanation of the alleged deadlock of the Persian Empire was its military weakness after Xerxes’ campaign in Hellas. However, modern scholars’ perceptions of the Achaemenid Empire’s policy against Hellas are based on uncritical readings of our sources as well as misunderstandings of their perspectives and Achaemenid imperial interest. These perspectives changed after 479 BCE when Greek authors showed more interest in a detailed description of Hellas’ political structures in the time of the so-called *pentecontaetia* (479–431 BCE). Thucydides as our main source for that time is clearly more focused on the political landscape on the eve of the Peloponnesian War than on examining Persian affairs. Thus, our available sources mask Persian-Greek relations nearly completely whereby we obtain only rudimentary information about Persian history (contra: Meister 1982). Aside from these historiographical problems, modern historians tend to overlook Xerxes I’s ambitions in stabilizing Persian dominion over the empire.

Nevertheless, Persian presence in the Aegean Sea was perceived by Athens as a hazard factor until the battle at the mouth of the river Eurymedon in 465 BCE, in which Persian troops were defeated in a combined land-sea battle. In the same year, Xerxes I was murdered and his son Artaxerxes I ascended the throne of the empire. The new king had to face the rising power of the Delian League, whose imperialism did not only jeopardize his most western satrapies but was focused now on the Levant and Cyprus. After securing essential support routes and holding control over the Aegean Sea, Athens’ aim was to firm up her increasing influence among the Greek islands. In this way, the Delian League focused on Cyprus, which was a strategic key position for Persian naval actions. Athens was aware of the danger of the Persian fleet as an unpleasant rival for her hegemony over the Aegean Sea. That Persian troops were still

a danger to the Athenian sphere of influence is supported by the fact that the Thracian city Doriscus remained under Persian control until the second half of the fifth century BCE.

During the campaign against Cyprus, the Libyan insurgent Inarus sent a request for assistance to the Athenian fleet. Inarus started a revolt against the Persians in the Nile Delta and promised the Athenians grain support in return for military assistance (Dandamaev 1989: pp. 238–239). Because of the contradicting Greek accounts about the Athenian campaigns in Egypt, it is hard to ascertain the exact length and details of Inarus' revolt.

The Libyan dynasts Inarus and (later) Amyrtaeus (Hdt. 3.15.3), who were probably patronage kings located on the western border of the satrapy of Egypt (for identification: Ruzicka 2012: p. 30; Quack 2006; Bichler 2016d), built up an army of mercenaries and penetrated the Nile Delta. That was not unusual for Egypt in the late period, when Libyan dynasts frequently caused problems as warlords in the Nile Delta. Modern scholarship calls these regional revolts led by foreign warlords the “Libyan disaster” of Egypt's Late Period (Ruzicka 2012: p. 19; Rottpeter 2007). The Athenians pursued Inarus' request for assistance and sent a secondment while the rest of the troops were still operating on Cyprus (Libourel 1971: pp. 607–608; Scharf 1955: p. 321). Before the Delian League arrived, Inarus achieved success against the Persian troops, which were defeated in a battle, but the garrison of Memphis prevented a further advance of the intruders.

In the meantime, Artaxerxes I ordered Megabyzus as satrap of the Trans-Euphrates satrapy to levy an army and also tried to persuade the Spartans to penetrate Attica. The financial power of the king to put pressure on inner Greek affairs brought him the epithet “the Longarmed” (Harrison 2011). Sparta accepted the Persians' gold and waged a war against Athens, which modern historians call the first Peloponnesian war (457–446/5 BCE). This situation caused serious troubles for the Delian League, which had to fight a war on two fronts. Nonetheless, the Delian League was able to keep on operating in the southeastern Mediterranean Sea. From an Athenian casualty list (IG I² 929) we get the information that troops of the Delian League were operating until 458 BCE in the Levant. Nevertheless, the Athenian campaign in Egypt and on Cyprus ended in a disaster because Inarus and his allies were thoroughly defeated by Megabyzus' army. The results of the Egypt intermezzo in 454 BCE were a weakened but not completely destroyed Athenian naval force, the execution of the rebel Inarus, the restoration of Persian power in Egypt, and a strengthened Persian influence on inner-Greek affairs. According to Herodotus (3.15.3), Artaxerxes installed the son of Inarus, and later also Amyrtaeus' son, as their fathers' successors. Thus, the Nile Delta remained under the control of pre-Saïte dynasts (Ruzicka 2012: p. 32), but was politically stabilized and seemed to be pacified. For Artaxerxes I, the

suppression of the revolt was a huge success, but other regions of the empire were still in unrest. It is still a matter of debate whether the satrapy of Transeuphratene revolted two times: Ctesias provides a doubtful account about a revolt led by Megabyzus (§§ 34–42). Also, troubles in Judah, according to the book Ezra (4:7–24), remain a matter of dispute, due to the lack of other sources (Briant 2002a: pp. 578–579).

In the following years, the Athenian foreign policy again challenged the victory of Artaxerxes in Egypt. After the Athenian *strategos* Cimon had returned from his exile, the Athenians ordered 200 ships of the Delian League under his command to set sail against Cyprus. According to Thucydides, 60 ships out of this contingent were sent to support a new revolt in the Nile Delta by Amyrtaeus (Thuc. 1.112.2–3; cf. Libourel 1971: pp. 607–608). Again, the events were only shortly described by Thucydides: after two victories over the Persians, one on sea and the other on land, the troops returned home (Thuc. 1.112.4). The Achaemenid army seemed to be well prepared because their commanders, Megabyzus and Artabazus, brought their naval forces in Cyprus into position. The army stood ready in Egypt and was apparently not defeated. The Delian League's troops failed to meet their strategic objectives because they were neither able to capture the city of Citium in Cyprus nor successfully backup Amyrtaeus. After the Persians' suppression of Amyrtaeus' revolt, the satrapy of Egypt stayed calm during the reign of Artaxerxes I.

After the death of Cimon during the siege of Citium on Cyprus, Athenian strategies against the Achaemenid Empire broke the mold: it was the work of the new demagogue Pericles, who was well aware of the Peloponnesian League as a threat for Athens' imperialistic ambitions. The ongoing conflict with Persia and the huge losses of the Delian League's troops in Egypt as well as Artaxerxes I's ambition to stabilize his empire were factors for both war parties to find an agreement on their spheres of influences. According to Diodorus (12.4.4–5), the Great King as well as the Athenians sent out embassies to negotiate peace. The Athenian ambassador Callias managed to negotiate conditions for the so-called "Peace of Callias" of 449/8 BCE. Yet, the historicity of this peace is debated because Thucydides does not mention it in his *archeologia*. But Herodotus has an Athenian embassy led by Callias (Hdt. 7.151), and Isocrates refers to this treaty as well (contra the historicity: Meister 1982; but see the critique of Meiggs 1984). If we believe Diodorus, the following points came to an agreement (cf. Diod. 12.4.5–6):

- 1) The Persians guaranteed "autonomy" to all Greek cities of Asia.
- 2) The Persian satraps were not allowed to move their troops closer to the sea than a three-day journey, and Persian naval activities beyond the Phaselis and the Cyanean Rocks were no longer accepted.
- 3) In return, the Athenians evinced to stop military interventions against Achaemenid territory.

From the Athenian point of view, the negotiations appeared to be triumphant, but nonetheless the Great King did not give up his claim to Asia Minor (especially to the Greek cities in the west). In fact, the satrap never disclaimed the tributes, thus we cannot see the “Peace of Callias” as any kind of “relief” of Greek cities from Persian power; its character appeared to be more the sort of a truce. Also, the hot spots of war in Egypt and Cyprus were not part of the negotiations. Asia Minor was no longer a scene of war but Athenian and Persian troops continued to fight each other in the south-eastern Mediterranean Sea. Thus, the peace of Callias was neither “the end of Persia’s century-long expansion efforts and the acceptance of boundaries” (Ruzicka 2012: p. 34) nor any kind of bottom of “the long reign of Artaxerxes which had been poor in glorious moments” (Dandamaev 1989: p. 257). Instead, the reign of Artaxerxes I can be viewed as a continuation of Xerxes I’s policy to stabilize the vast multiethnic and multicultural empire. This was also a time of glorious military victories because the Delian League as the only powerful player on the borders of the Persian Empire had suffered heavy defeats by the Achaemenid army. Neither enormous Athenian expeditions nor two revolts could endanger Persian rule in Egypt. Furthermore, it was a major achievement of Artaxerxes to have pacified Egypt and ended the Athenian interventions with a “truce” and without a loss of territory. Moreover, Persian interventions had caused a major inner-Greek conflict, which led Hellas into the eve of the great Peloponnesian War (431–404 BCE). To sum up, there cannot be found any trace of a weak and vulnerable Persian Empire, which, according to a Greek perspective, was in decline at least in the fourth century BCE (Sancisi-Weerdenburg 2002).

Steady State of Empire

In retrospect, we can state that Darius I was a successful usurper who ensured his reign against rebelling local elites and established a new dynasty without the loss of territory. He relied on already existing structures and frames from the times of the Teispid dynasty and accommodated them to create new legitimization strategies. His implemented measures were successful as can be seen in the successful transmission of kingship to his son Xerxes. After the consolidation of power, Darius arranged several marriages to legitimate his reign through dynastic alliances. According to Herodotus’ account we can constitute two marriage strategies: At first, Darius married Cyrus’ daughters Atossa and Artystone, Parmys, the wife of Bardiya, and Phaidyme, the daughter of his co-conspirator Otanes (Hdt. 3.88). Hence, he arranged to create a dynastic legitimization, based on two firm grounds: continuation of the Teispid dynasty through Atossa as mother of the heir apparent, and security for his reign through being tied up with the powerful co-conspirators’ families. Thus,

Darius redressed the legitimacy pressure of his status as a usurper by chaining himself to Cyrus' wife and daughter (Rollinger 1998; Jacobs 2011; Henkelman 2011). It is also striking that Darius and his successors did not marry wives originating from outside of the empire. Marrying exclusively daughters of the interior high elite remained a persistent custom of the Achaemenids until the reign of Darius II, when the first exogamous marriage is attested (Briant 2002a: pp. 589–590). Another innovative way of legitimization was the definition of a specific in-group that exclusively exercised power. Darius calls himself “a man from Parsa” and claims to be of “Aryan descent.” It was the Persian aristocrats who occupied the highest offices (cf. Klinkott 2008: pp. 235–242), thus forming a socially constructed “*éthno-classe dominante*” (Briant 1988a,b; see also Chapter 3 Peoples and Languages). Therefore, the ethnic label “Aryan” was a marker for “nobility” and referred to a “noble pedigree.” Invoking descendancy from a specific *gens* is a unique “ethno-linguistic marker” in Ancient Near Eastern strategies of legitimation and can be seen as typically Achaemenid (Rollinger 2017: p. 201). The acceptance of the Achaemenids as a new dynasty can be seen in Xerxes' referring to Darius as his father. This means that the lack of a genealogical connection to Cyrus and Cambyzes was consciously redressed (Curtis, et al. 1995: pp. 150–151).

Another point of Darius' policy to consolidate his acquired power was to create a special relationship with his eminent co-conspirators, in order to maintain his superior position. Several passages in Herodotus' *Histories* exhibit the pertinent danger that representatives of the new imperial elite might become too powerful. Herodotus hints at these potential conflicts through accounts about cruel punishments (cf. the record of human violence in Rollinger 2010: pp. 590–598, Degen 2020). Yet, Darius presented gifts to his loyal followers and lifted them into higher imperial offices (cf. the story about Zopyrus and his son Megabyzus in Hdt. 3.153; a collection of sources is provided by Briant 2002a: p. 128, cf. Chapter 73 Banquet and Gift Exchange). Darius I explicitly proclaims in his monumental inscription of Bisitun to protect the lineages of his six co-conspirators (cf. DB op. § 68). Apparently, Darius' reign was embossed by a dialogue between the ruler and a well-defined elite class, thus establishing a balance that guaranteed his unrivaled status as usurper-king.

After Darius' death, his son Xerxes became king without any intricacies, although Xerxes had an elder brother. It occurs that Xerxes, as son of Atossa, was viewed as the only legitimate prince. This recalls Darius' marriage strategy intending to install an unrivaled heir to the throne. Xerxes' “birth-in-purple” (Briant 1991) is presented by Herodotus as a conflict with the other sons of Darius (Hdt. 7.2). However, a document from the Persepolis Archive illustrates that already 12 years before Darius' death ^{Hal}*šēir-šá*, Elamite for

Xerxes (see PFT NN 1657 in Rossi 2012: p. 454), held a high office. Hence, Xerxes was long prepared to become his father's successor.

The fact that Xerxes succeeded his father to the throne without vast rebellions or being challenged by a usurper clearly demonstrates how efficient Darius' strategy of legitimation worked out to be. Even the murder of Xerxes I in 465 BCE by his own son, probably the later Artaxerxes I, highlights that the Achaemenids ruled the empire without rivals out of other elite families (for the various identifications of Xerxes' murderer: cf. Wiesehöfer 2007 for the classical traditions; for the Astronomical Diaries cf. Kuhrt 2007: p. 306). It is true that internecine intrigues continued to trouble the Achaemenids until Alexander's invasion of Asia, but all further kings derived from their family (Rollinger 2014b; Briant 2002b; Thomas 2017).

It is the analysis of historical processes in a wider comprehensive framework, provided by the unequal information of indigenous and classical sources, that offers an idea of the achievements of the reigns of Xerxes I and Artaxerxes I. The royal inscriptions exhibit a Persian king Xerxes, who continued his father's works and thus further developed the Persian conception of a perfect and successful Achaemenid king (Sancisi-Weerdenburg 2002: p. 558).⁶ Meanwhile, Herodotus provides "insight on the Greek vision of an eastern monarch" (Sancisi-Weerdenburg 2002: p. 558). This monarch is presented as an Asian despot who is on the one hand caught in the course of history and on the other hand struck by blindness toward divine borders.

Court and Architecture

Our sources about the court and court ceremonials derive from Greek authors and are clouded by their worldviews. Through Greek lenses Achaemenid court ceremonials served to underline the *topos* of Asiatic despotism and to exemplify the alleged divine character of the Achaemenid king through a misunderstanding of the court protocol (for the *prokynesis*, a specific gesture of greeting to be performed by visitors to the king, see Rollinger 2012). The empire's center was not strictly situated in a certain capital, the Achaemenids were itinerant kings, traveling between the residences Persepolis, Susa, Ecbatana, and Babylon (Tuplin 1998; Briant 1988a,b). These centers were built and largely dismantled by the first three Achaemenids. Shortly after his consolidation of power Darius ordered the building of a palace at the foot of the Kuh-e Ramat mountain. This complex was called Pārsa in Old Persian and *Persepolis* in Greek. Xerxes vastly enlarged this palace, whereby it mostly became the structure of its modern appearance (Jacobs 1997). On the basis of royal inscriptions, we can obtain some information about Darius I's, Xerxes I's, and Artaxerxes I's building programs in these residences. The proclamation

that the buildings of the predecessors were enlarged became a constant element of the building charters of Xerxes I. The Great Kings used the specific knowledge and resources of their subjects and lands to represent the multicultural character of their empire through the physical appearance of their palaces (Rollinger 2008). Apart from this, new inventions in the funeral architecture were made during Darius' reign. The so-called gabled hut tomb – the style of Cyrus' tomb at Pasargadae – was replaced by the rock-cut tomb type, a form which became programmatic for all later Achaemenids (Jacobs 2010). The rock at Naqš-e Rostam was chosen as the new gravesite for the kings, which brought the monumental Achaemenid rock relief sculpting into the Persian heartland (Canepa 2014: pp. 56–59).

Some Concluding Remarks: Changes and Achievements

Reviewing the reigns of Darius I, Xerxes, and Artaxerxes I in a more general way, it becomes apparent that the empire faced some important structural changes during this period. Expansion came to a halt and the imperial forces were concentrated on maintaining and systematically administering what had been conquered. The tax system was slowly but consequently reestablished and a more direct rule was organized where Persians started to play a more and more crucial role. At the same time, the new dynasty that was founded by Darius in a dramatic civil war was firmly established by his son and grandson and never questioned again (Wiesehöfer 2007). These changes also affected the royal ideology as becomes manifest in the royal inscriptions. Since conquest had come to an end, history as a sequence of events also begins to disappear from Achaemenid royal inscriptions. What we see is a static empire that ruled the world safely guided by its Great Kings with a special relationship to the gods (Rollinger 2014a). Revolts could not change this perspective. Egypt remained a place of some unrest, whereas Babylonia was definitely pacified in the reign of Xerxes. This has nothing to do with exceptionally harsh Achaemenid responses in Babylonia as compared with Egypt. It is striking that the permanence of Egyptian unrest in Persian times recalls the ongoing Babylonian resistance toward Assyrian occupation. This similarity is probably due to geographical and geo-strategic circumstances. Egypt was a Persian periphery as Babylonia was an Assyrian one. Babylonian resistance was always powered by Elam, which was beyond Assyrian reach. This favorable location of Babylonia came to end in Persian times, whereas Egypt still had the advantage of being a peripheral zone that kept resistance alive from the fifth to the fourth centuries BCE. Although the Achaemenid dynasty was firmly established with the reigns of Xerxes and Artaxerxes I, and was not challenged again until the emergence of Alexander III, the same stability does not apply

for succession within the Achaemenid family. Xerxes was chosen as heir apparent, although he was not Darius' eldest son. He was murdered in 465 BCE, a fate shared by Artaxerxes III (338 BCE), Arses (336 BCE), and Darius III (330 BCE). This instability within the Achaemenid family, however, did not affect the stability of the empire, which remained for about 150 years one of the largest and most successful superpowers in world history.

NOTES

- 1 At the same time, however, he was clever enough to use the citizens' desire for political participation for his own affairs.
- 2 Out of about 1000 Greek poleis known so far only about 30 constituted the "Hellenic League." The supreme command of its naval and land troops fell to Sparta.
- 3 Darius I as a usurper and Xerxes as founder of a new dynasty apparently had an additional need to bolster their legitimacy.
- 4 Note that at the end of the fifth century BCE Greek intellectuals were still very well aware that victory over the Achaemenid Persian Empire was much more due to Persian failure than to Greek military achievement. For this is exactly what the Corinthians highlight in their famous speech addressed to the Lacedaemonians accusing them for their inactive policy toward the aggressive Athenians: "Yet you know that the Barbarian failed mostly by his own fault..." (Thuc. 1.69.5. by Loeb).
- 5 However, one may doubt whether modern quantity theory of money can also be applied to Babylonian hacksilver.
- 6 For Artaxerxes I barely any inscriptions have been preserved.

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CHAPTER 32

From Darius II to Darius III

Carsten Binder

Darius II (423–405/4 BCE)

The beginning of the reign of Darius II exemplifies the problems that beset the historical study of the Achaemenids. We have, on the one hand, the very scanty indigenous historical tradition from within the territory ruled by the Achaemenids and, on the other, an apparently detailed and well-informed historical tradition transmitted by Greek authors. The value of this Greek tradition, however, continues to be overestimated today. In most cases, it is unclear where Greek authors have obtained their information; they purport to relate some of the most intimate happenings at the king's court; yet at the same time, when describing the simplest scenes, they make serious mistakes or show significant gaps. Scholars are generally reluctant to engage these sources critically and frequently attribute such errors to the authors' informants or to misunderstandings. But since these sources consist mostly of stereotypical descriptions of the court of the Great Kings with recurring romantic elements (Wiesehöfer 2011), a fundamental skepticism of these sources should be the dominant approach. Even when these accounts correctly record banal details or even the names of high noblemen, a handful of apparently historically correct data by no means permits us to conclude that the overall narrative is accurate.

Translated from German by John Noël Dillon.

A Companion to the Achaemenid Persian Empire, Volume I, First Edition.

Edited by Bruno Jacobs and Robert Rollinger.

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If we examine the few surviving sources from within the Achaemenid Empire, the succession of Darius after the death of his father, the Great King Artaxerxes I, went smoothly. That last secure date from Babylonian sources connected to Artaxerxes comes from the last third of December 424 BCE. Babylonian scribes likewise set the beginning of the reign of Darius II in the eleventh Babylonian month: at least according to these scribes, Darius was reigning by mid-February 423 BCE. Accordingly, the transfer of power must have taken place between December 424 and February 423 BCE (Stolper 1983; Depuydt 1995).

Since the legitimate successor first had to observe an empire-wide period of mourning, during which certain duties, such as the burial of his predecessor, had to be performed, a date of December 424/January 423 BCE for Artaxerxes' death and the accession of Darius perhaps a month later is not surprising. Since Artaxerxes I lived to an advanced age, one may assume that the legitimate heir had been designated by his father long in advance. Nothing in these sources testifies against a smooth transfer of power from Artaxerxes I to Darius II.

The Greek tradition presents a different picture; more precisely, the influential Greek author Ctesias, who directly or indirectly is the ultimate source of all other Greek texts. According to Ctesias, after the death of Artaxerxes I, his only legitimate son, Xerxes, ascended the throne (thus becoming Xerxes II); this succession was rejected by some of Xerxes' half-brothers, and so after only 45 days Xerxes was murdered by his half-brother, Secyndianus. This Secyndianus, who on account of methodologically problematic source contamination is also known as Sogdianus in the scholarly literature (Schmitt 2006: pp. 272–276), will have ruled 6 months and 15 days before yet another half-brother, Ochus – the future Darius II – had him removed under suspicious circumstances (Ctesias F14 [46]; F 15 [47–50]).

If one assesses the relative merits of these two strands of the tradition, the fact that the non-Greek sources know nothing of either a Xerxes or a Secyndianus/Sogdianus should tip the balance. The chronology of the Babylonian scribes is very reliable, and so we are forced to ask how they could have dated documents to the reign of Darius II as legitimate king already in February if Xerxes and Secyndianus had held power at least until June or July 423 BCE. Scholars in favor of Ctesias' reliability frequently cite the fact that his history fairly accurately records the names of noblemen who are attested as politically powerful persons in Babylonian economic texts. It is methodologically unsound, however, to assume the historicity of the entire narrative on the basis of such details and then to interpret other sources according to the Greek tradition. Circular reasoning is the result: because the Babylonian texts apparently support Ctesias, the purport of the economic texts is then, with interpretive effort, established on the basis provided by Ctesias. The usurpation described only by Ctesias thus

becomes historical reality. In light of the demonstrably romantic character of Ctesias' *Persica*, mere homonymity does not warrant such an optimistic approach. Besides the fact that identity of name does not automatically mean identity of person, it is precisely for persons ranking very high in the hierarchy, whose degree of famousness we cannot now establish, that simple homonymity does not suffice for far-reaching conclusions. Whoever, then, has first Xerxes II and then Secyndianus/Sogdianus follow Artaxerxes I before listing Darius II should know that he does so on very tenuous evidence.

The sources for the actual reign of Darius II are hardly better. Some scraps of information from Babylonia exist in the Murašû Archive and astronomical records. These lack context, however, and thus do not convey a coherent picture. They only cast spotlights on isolated events such as the mustering of troops in the city of Uruk. Some documents in Aramaic from Egypt give us a glimpse of conditions in this satrapy. Isolated Greek notices, without echo in the indigenous tradition, tell of wars against the Pisidians and Cadusians, who are virtually stereotypical enemies of the Great Kings in Greek texts, but the dubious provenance of these stories does not permit us to sketch Persian foreign policy in any detail.

Besides the fragments of Ctesias, which report mainly palace intrigues, attempted usurpations, and punishments at the court, and deserve from little to no trust, more valuable accounts are available from Thucydides and Xenophon. Here, however, the focus lies on the Peloponnesian War. Persian policy plays a part only in the conflict with the Greeks in western Asia Minor. The protagonists on the Persian side are the satraps Tissaphernes (Lydia) and Pharnabazus (Hellespontine Phrygia). Not until the usurpation of the Carian dynast Amorges (413 BCE, Thuc. 8.54.3) with Athenian support did the Persian king intervene in the conflict through his satraps. The Persian claim to the *poleis* of western Asia Minor, which was probably never abandoned, was again expressed in demands for tribute. Even when Tissaphernes subsequently made treaties with Sparta, though, no consistent Persian policy in the conflict is discernible before 407 BCE. This should by no means be ascribed to the Great King's supposed ignorance of the events. Many other factors may have played a part. Besides the fact that we have no information about conditions in the rest of the empire (where much more important events may have been underway from the perspective of the Great King), the status quo in the west was very advantageous. Both of the most powerful satraps were locked in competition with one another, which kept both of them under control. Athens, previously the King's most powerful opponent in the region, and Sparta paralyzed one another, so that the Delian League's sphere of influence became vulnerable. The conflict in the west might also have been seen as a regional problem for the satraps that required only a limited response from the administrative center of the empire. The perception of the scale of the

conflict conveyed by Thucydides need not have been shared by non-Greek contemporaries. That the necessary resources for large-scale operations had been available to Darius II is illustrated by the shift in Persian policy in 407 BCE.

Only then did the royal court show a clear interest in the peripheral conflict taking place in politically and economically significant territory of western Asia Minor. Cyrus, one of Darius II's sons (known in Greek literature as Cyrus the Younger), was made satrap of Lydia, Greater Phrygia, and Cappadocia, as well as *karanos* (Supreme Commander, Xen. Anab. 1.1.2; Xen. Hell. 1.4.3) of western Asia Minor. This important appointment should probably be interpreted as compensation for the elevation of his brother Arsēs (later regal name: Artaxerxes) as designated heir, which took place at the latest in 408/7 BCE. Plutarch's description of a later designation of the heir on Darius II's deathbed (405 BCE) should not be considered historical.

The ostensibly ambitious Cyrus pursued a consistently Sparta-friendly policy, undoubtedly with his father's knowledge. The significant increase in subsidies for Sparta gave the Greek polis a decisive advantage in its resource-draining war with Athens, which was decided at the battle of Aegospotami in 405 BCE. Athens lost almost its entire fleet and was cut off from important supplies from the Black Sea region.

Artaxerxes II (405/4–359/8 BCE)

The actual succession of Artaxerxes II after the death of Darius in 404 BCE appears to have gone smoothly. Yet Plutarch, whose remarkable biography of Artaxerxes II is an eloquent but hardly reliable source of information (Binder 2008), reports an assassination attempt by Cyrus during the coronation in Pasargadae. But this account (and all the details about the coronation itself: Binder 2010), as indeed all references from the *Persica* literature of the fourth century BCE, should be treated with the greatest caution. The fact alone that Cyrus was retained in his position as satrap of important provinces after 404 BCE shows that the allegations against him could at least not be proven.

Artaxerxes' reign was marked by unrest and fighting for the preservation of the unity of the empire. He was forced to accept the eventual loss of Egypt probably between 404 and 399 BCE. During the same period, Cyrus the younger made an attempt to usurp the throne, immortalized in Xenophon's *Anabasis*. With the aid of indigenous troops and about 13 000 Greek mercenaries, among them Xenophon, Cyrus made a daring attack on his brother's rule. The decisive battle between the two brothers was fought near Cunaxa in Babylonia (Plut. Art. 8.2.). Cyrus' usurpation failed as he lost his life in the battle, but his Greek mercenaries were victorious. Xenophon's *Anabasis* is primarily dedicated to the events after the battle, describing the heroic return

of the Greeks from the heart of enemy territory. It is because of his account (and less directly the *Cyropaedia* and *Agesilaus*), and because of the statements of other authors (especially Isocrates), that the Persian Empire appears to have been in a steady decline, reaching its nadir under Artaxerxes II. This model of Persian decadence has enjoyed great popularity from antiquity to modern scholarly works, but it can scarcely be maintained. It is undeniable that the reign of Artaxerxes II was shaken by a series of domestic and foreign conflicts and crises. But nearly all of these were successfully overcome. The fact alone that Artaxerxes II reigned longer than any other Achaemenid ruler should serve as a measure of his reign's success. The record of his political achievements confirms this impression.

Although he had supported Sparta in the struggle against Athens, the Great King found himself confronted by an aggressive Spartan policy in western Asia Minor at the beginning of the fourth century (c. 400–394 BCE). Artaxerxes endured military setbacks first under the Spartan commander Thibron and then under the general Dercylidas. Spartan efforts to “liberate” Greek *poleis* from the Persian yoke picked up speed under King Agesilaus from 396 BCE. His recall to Greece despite military successes in Asia Minor (victory at Pactolus in 395 BCE) must be connected to the financial support that *poleis* hostile to Sparta (Athens, Thebes, Corinth, Argos) received from the Great King. Our fragmentary sources make it impossible to determine how decisively these subsidies influenced the declaration of war on Sparta in Greece. There is no doubt, however, that the Persian Great King supported Sparta's opponents in the so-called Corinthian War (395–386 BCE). The construction of a Persian fleet under the command of the Athenian Conon from 397/6 BCE should be viewed in this context. The venture was crowned with success: in 394 BCE, at the Battle of Cnidus, the largest Persian naval victory since the Athenian defeat in the Nile delta in 454 BCE, Sparta lost much of its fleet and with it the means of operating in Asia Minor. Within a few months of the Battle of Cnidus, most *poleis* of Asia Minor had driven out the Spartan harmosts and placed themselves under Persian authority (Xen. Hell. 4.8.1–3; Diod. 14.84.3f.). Already by 394 BCE, the status quo prior to the successes of the Delian League in the 470s BCE had de facto been restored. The Persian fleet under Conon subsequently advanced as far as Corinth. It was the largest Persian naval operation off the Greek coast in 80 years. To call this a high point of Achaemenid power is fully justified (Briant 2002: p. 645). The Great King was a leading figure on the political stage of mainland Greece.

Only after Athens had supported the rebellious Euagoras of Cyprus in his efforts to extend his rule over all of Cyprus and thus confront Artaxerxes II himself did the Great King again help Sparta in a largely internal Greek conflict.

The powerful role played by the Persian Great King is illustrated clearly in the so-called “King's Peace” (387/6 BCE). On the one hand, the Great King

appears as mediator and guarantor of a peace treaty among Greeks that ended the Corinthian War and initially strengthened Sparta's position in Greece. On the other, Persian claims to rule over Asia Minor and Cyprus are confirmed (Xen. Hell. 5.1.31; Urban 1991: pp. 101–125; Jehne 1994: pp. 31–47). Thus the status quo prior to 479 BCE and the military successes of the Athenian League were restored. The variety of political and military means deployed by the Great King suggests complex strategies of action and points to the large, even inexhaustible, resources of the empire; in no way does it indicate military weakness (Wiesehöfer 2006: p. 37). It is no surprise that the Greek sources from this period reiterate the general weakness of the Persian Empire: they saw themselves as contemporaries to the Persians' constantly growing political and military influence even in internal Greek controversies. The tendentious character of Greek sources derives rather from literary embellishment than from a realistic representation of this situation.

The sources for the late reign of Artaxerxes are even worse. Primarily Diodorus Siculus and Plutarch preserve the tradition, who, besides Ephorus and Dinon, perhaps made use of an otherwise unknown work by Heracleides of Cyme and authors even more obscure to our view (Plut. Art. 21.2). Exactly as with Dinon, these authors should be considered continuators and rivals of Ctesias. For example, the accounts about the Great King's campaigns against the Cadusians in Plutarch and Diodorus are literary doublets, one account dependent on the other. Plutarch merely gives a slightly different version of the campaign Diodorus records for the year 385/4 BCE. The elaboration of literary constructions which do not correspond to our understanding of the representation of historical reality is typical of *Persica* literature, if not for fourth-century historiography generally. Scholars thus have few and often no means of determining the historicity of the campaign mentioned (Binder 2008: pp. 316–321). There is no denying that Artaxerxes II suffered a series of setbacks. Thus his attempt to recover Egypt in 374/3 BCE failed (Van der Spek 1998: pp. 251–252). In Asia Minor, the Great King faced a series of revolts from satraps within the empire, which have been described in earlier scholarship, on the basis of Diodorus (15.93.1), as the “Great Satraps’ Revolt.” Indeed some satraps, such as Datames (Cappadocia), Ariobarzanes (Phrygia), and for a time the famous Mausolus (Caria), rebelled against the Great King with military force. Modern research, however, has greatly qualified the threat to the empire that this rebellion actually posed (Weiskopf 1989), especially in light of the conflicting interests among the rebellious satraps and their lack of a coherent strategy. Artaxerxes II was ultimately able to subjugate all the satrapies in question.

The historical content of information about court matters in the late reign of the Great King is again impossible to determine. Artaxerxes' designated heir Darius, together with the noble Tiribazus, is supposed to have rebelled against his father after a quarrel over a woman. The usurpation attempt was

thwarted and the heir apparent executed (Plut. Art. 26–29). The ensuing contest over the succession was fought out among three other sons. Through intrigues against his brothers, Ochus, the future Artaxerxes III, ultimately survived and thus succeeded to Artaxerxes, who, now worn down by sorrow, died at an advanced age. Diodorus knows none of these details. According to him, Ochus succeeded his father seamlessly (Diod. 15.93.1). Obviously, the succession and transfer of power are always sensitive points that can lead to great problems. Yet, as already seen in the succession of Darius II to Artaxerxes I, beyond the mere existence of the Greek account no evidence for the historicity of these events can be found. The existence of a parallel tradition in Pompeius Trogus/Justin should not mislead one into attributing a high degree of credibility to these accounts: with high probability it is not an independent tradition. A source-critical analysis does not operate with quantitative criteria. The quality of an account does not improve merely because it is repeated and reworked significantly later. Trogus, who lived long after the events, naturally turned to the *Persica* literature for his depictions. In contrast to the tradition that Plutarch preserves, he reports that Artaxerxes III took drastic measures to preserve his power after succeeding to the throne (Just. 10.3). The origin of these stories is utterly obscure to us in many respects. The historical value of their detailed depictions of intrigues, conspiracies, acts of violence, and the excesses of the court should, despite the seductiveness of allegedly insider information, be set very low.

One aspect of the religious policy of Artaxerxes II creates significant difficulties for scholars. Until Artaxerxes II, inscriptions from the time of Darius I mention anonymous gods alongside Ahuramazda, who takes preeminence (e.g. DB §62). First Artaxerxes II revokes this anonymous status. Alongside Ahuramazda, he mentions the goddess Anahita and the god Mithras (e.g. A²Sa). He thus introduces these previously nameless gods into the public-political area and simultaneously reduces the exclusivity of Ahuramazda, who nonetheless occupies a dominant position in the inscriptions also under Artaxerxes II. The Babylonian historian Berossus, moreover, preserves an edict of Artaxerxes according to which he ordered that statues of Anahita should be erected throughout the empire (Berossos, FGrH 680, F 11), thus establishing a statue cult. Artaxerxes is recorded as the builder in at least Ecbatana, Susa, and Babylon. There is little scholarly consensus as to how these measures should be interpreted. As so often, the sources permit us only either to indicate problems or to relate hypothetical events.

Artaxerxes III (359/8–338 BCE)

Despite Plutarch's account, Ochus/Artaxerxes III appears to have succeeded his father without any notable conflict between November 359 and April 358 BCE, according to dates preserved in Babylonian tablets. Already in 361 BCE,

his father had put him at the head of significant forces to fight against the rebellious satraps and the Pharaoh Tachôs (Sync. p. 486f.). There is no convincing evidence that Artaxerxes II did not trust his son, as Plutarch claims. Also in this case, it seems that the succession was determined well in advance.

Artaxerxes III stands in a bad light both in many ancient accounts and in modern criticism based on them. Plutarch even claims that Artaxerxes surpassed all other Great Kings in cruelty and bloodthirstiness (Plut. Art. 30.9). Diodorus Siculus reports that Artaxerxes plundered and destroyed temples in Egypt and extorted money from the priests (Diod. 16.51.2). A famous example for the supposedly sacrilegious behavior of Artaxerxes is connected to the recovery of Egypt in 343 BCE: after the conquest, the Great King allegedly had the sacred Apis bull slaughtered so he could eat him (Ael. var. hist. 4.8; Plut. mor. 355C). A very similar misdeed is also attributed to the first conqueror of Egypt, Cambyses. In both cases, the foreign aggressors are supposed to have abused local cults with extreme acts of sacrilege and intolerance. Such behavior, however, stands in complete contradiction to the rest of Achaemenid policy of conquest, which normally preserved and even promoted local cults in order to facilitate the exercise of power on the ground. Scholars thus consider the slaughter of the Apis bull an invention of Egyptian priests to damage the reputation of the conquerors (Mildenberg 1999).

At the beginning of his reign, Artaxerxes III had inherited unresolved conflicts in Asia Minor left over from his father's reign. During the years 356–352 BCE, he struggled against the satrap Artabazus (Hellespontine Phrygia), who according to Diodorus received support first from the Athenian *strategos* Chares and then from the Theban Pammenes (Diod. 16.7.3–4; 21–22.1–2; Moysey 1975: pp. 295–317). The Great King ultimately succeeded in bringing the renegade satrapies under control, so that Asia Minor at this point was consolidated under Achaemenid rule. Much about this rebellion is unclear. Artabazus inexplicably is said to have taken refuge with Philip II of Macedon.

The simultaneous attempt to recover Egypt appears to have backfired; at any rate, we know practically nothing about this expedition. Renewed preparations for an Egyptian campaign were again interrupted by rebellion in Phoenicia, beginning with Sidon under King Tennes. The real causes of this rebellion are, as so often, mysterious, despite the at times detailed account of Diodorus. Various kings on Cyprus also revolted. The Egyptian pharaoh Nectanebo supported the uprisings, but Egypt's part in the outbreak of the revolts is hard to determine. The struggle between the rebels and the satraps of the Great King progressed with varying fortune. Artaxerxes III was initially able to advance from Babylon against Sidon with a large army and – allegedly through Tennes' treachery (Diod. 16.43.1–45.6) – take the city and end the revolt with his execution (345 BCE). Thereafter, further Phoenician cities supposedly submitted to the Great King. Yet there is no evidence that cities

other than Sidon had been actively involved in the fighting. Shortly afterward Cyprus was also brought back under Achaemenid control.

The pacification of these flash points enabled Artaxerxes III to attack his original goal, Egypt. The king's army marched from Phoenicia to Egypt and conquered the country in 343/2 BCE. Artaxerxes thus ended roughly 65 years of Egyptian independence from the Achaemenid Empire. He succeeded in restoring the empire nearly to its borders under Darius I, so that one might say he had successfully continued his father's policy. By the middle of the fourth century, the Achaemenid Empire was at the height of its power. Our primary source for all of these events is essentially Diodorus: even though his account is quite detailed, the motives of the actors are frequently unclear.

The Transition to Darius III

While scholarly analysis – though not our Greek sources – demonstrates that the reigns of Artaxerxes II and III were highpoints of Achaemenid power, the rapidly ensuing succession crises after Artaxerxes III's presumably violent death suggest that the empire entered a period of considerable weakness. The conquest of the Achaemenid Empire by a foreign enemy (Alexander) almost seems logical in this context. Diodorus relates the end of Artaxerxes: The hated king was allegedly poisoned in 338 BCE by one of his confidants, the eunuch Bagoas (Diod. 17.5). Bagoas had risen to power under Artaxerxes III and – again according to Diodorus – had both commanded forces during the conquest of Egypt and had held a vital leadership position afterward in the “Upper Satrapies.” Most of Artaxerxes' family members perished with him, with the exception of his youngest son, Arses, whom Bagoas placed on the throne as Artaxerxes IV. When Arses/Artaxerxes proved not as easy to manipulate as Bagoas had anticipated, and even planned his removal, Bagoas had him murdered two years later (336 BCE) and placed Darius III on the throne. According to Arrian, in his correspondence with Darius III after the Battle of Issus (333 BCE), Alexander claimed that Darius had arranged the murder of Arses/Artaxerxes IV (Arr. 2.14.5) with Bagoas and had no legitimate claim to the throne. In the Greek tradition, the rule of the Achaemenids ends with Arses/Artaxerxes (Diod. 17.5.5). Diodorus, however, preserves another version in which Darius (Justin/Trogus calls him Codoman, Just. 10.3.4) supposedly received great honors from Artaxerxes III during the wars against the Cadusians for proving his personal worth (Diod. 17.6.1–3). Scholars conjecture that both these versions are related. But while the first version (Alexander's letter) definitely may have been influenced in some manner by Macedonian propaganda, it is uncertain whether the second version represents a genuinely Persian reaction (counterpropaganda) to it (Briant 2002: 770f.). More

probably this account is purely Greek in origin. Why should Persian propaganda counter Alexander's allegations by praising Darius' heroic deeds if the claim he is not descended from the royal line is patently false? Who is the intended addressee of this counterpropaganda? Even Diodorus knows that Darius is the son of Arsanes and grandson of Ostanes, thus the brother of Artaxerxes II (Diod. 17.5.5), something that scholars do not dispute. After Ochus' death, Darius was a legitimate heir to the throne, and his claim was not seriously contested later. Moreover, it is highly implausible that Bagoas alone was the driving force and "kingmaker" behind all these revolts. As so often, the one-sided tradition (even if there are different Greek versions, the question remains where the Greeks got their information about the most intimate details of the king's court) prevents us from drawing a convincing picture beyond merely sketching the sources. The murder of Artaxerxes III may have been the work of opponents of a hated king, and the prominent person Bagoas merely the means with which the Greek sources tell the tale with appropriate excitement. But the succession of Darius II to Artaxerxes I should show us that Greek authors were perfectly capable of inventing events. The historicity of Bagoas as a powerful figure at court cannot be doubted. That he alone, however, staged the elevation of kings at his discretion is inconceivable. When the same Bagoas then attempted to eliminate also Darius III by poison in 336 BCE, the Great King forced him to drink the poison himself (Diod. 17.5.6). The episode perfectly fits the Greek picture of the anarchy and instability at the Persian court, which is characteristic of the Greek image of the Persians, but it is no reliable evidence for the Achaemenid court.

Darius III (336–330 BCE)

As with the transition period, the sources for the brief reign of Darius III are dismal. Besides the Greek sources, the main goal of which is to put the deeds of Alexander in the best possible light, there is virtually no indigenous tradition in any form. Darius III thus appears exclusively as Alexander's cowardly and incompetent opponent. There are few traces of him in Babylon and these tell us little, for example the date of the battle of Gaugamela or mention of Darius' name (Sachs 1977). For Artaxerxes II, and to a much lesser extent Artaxerxes III, we could at least make use of other sources than Greek texts. The scarcity of sources for the last century of the Achaemenids is especially problematic here.

After Philip's victory at Chaeronea (338 BCE) and the foundation of the Corinthian League, the Achaemenid Empire again faced an aggressive Greek-Macedonian policy in its western satrapies. The first expeditionary force reached Asia Minor in 336 BCE. We have little information about the precise

actions of this landing, which undoubtedly served as preparation for a larger invasion. Military action was taken in Asia Minor even after Philip's murder and Alexander's accession. The Persian counteroffensive was led mainly by Memnon of Rhodes (this, at any rate, is the impression given in the Greek sources, e.g. Diodorus). Like other Greeks, Memnon fought as a mercenary or mercenary leader for the Great King. We have no information about the actions of the satraps, but it is scarcely conceivable that they did not take part in the fighting. It is a well-known stereotype of Greek sources, though, that successful attacks on Greeks are made only by Greek mercenary leaders and not by Persian commanders. Memnon achieved great success and beat back the Macedonian forces. In 334 BCE before Alexander's invasion, only Abydus remained under Macedonian control (Arr. 1.11.6). Early in 334 BCE, Alexander crossed the Hellespont with his army and swiftly took up position on the Granicus. A Persian army under the command of satraps and generals took up position at Zeleia (Arr. 1.12.8–10). Memnon's plan to leave scorched earth in Alexander's path and to bring the war to Greece and Macedonia as quickly as possible, in order to cut off Alexander's supplies, was rejected (Arr. 1.12.8; Diod. 17.18.2–4; Curt. 7.4.3f.). The tradition on these matters is so tendentious and favorable toward Memnon that clarity is impossible. The entire war council could be an invention, and the satraps' motives can no longer be recovered. Scholars attribute the satraps' hesitation to sacrifice their land to devastation to Achaemenid imperial ideology: the king or satrap is the gardener of the empire, who must provide for the good of the land (Wiesehöfer 1994: p. 28).

The Battle of the Granicus (334 BCE), in which Alexander was victorious, was no devastating defeat from the Persian perspective because the losses were not very high. According to Arrian, 1000 cavalry and some high Persian commanders fell (Arr. 1.16.2). Yet Alexander subsequently succeeded in bringing large swaths of western Asia Minor gradually under his control, without being threatened by a Persian army. He merely had to break the resistance of individual cities that refused to welcome him as liberator. Alexander was unable to take Halicarnassus and Myndus in this way. Resistance was offered by Persian garrisons still on site (e.g. Miletus), but the Persians suffered bitter losses (e.g. Sardis) such as they had never seen in the long history of Greek-Persian conflict. We unfortunately have no information about the Great King's court, since the focus of the Greek accounts is on Alexander. After the defeat at the Granicus, though, Memnon was made general in Asia Minor and commander of the fleet. Alexander may have attempted to compensate for the inferiority of his naval forces by conquering Persian naval bases. It is doubtful whether such a plan ever existed, however. Given ancient conditions and the limited manpower available to Alexander, it would have been impossible to keep the Persian fleet from the entire Ionian coast. Memnon appears – in the account

of Diodorus and Appian – not only to have planned attacks on the Ionian coast but also to have followed up the plan to transfer the war to the Greek motherland. This might have inspired Athens, Sparta, and Thebes with hope of throwing off the Macedonian yoke. At the time of Memnon's death (he perished during the siege of Mytilene) in the summer of 333 BCE, though, nothing of any such strategy was to be seen. Command of the fleet was not abandoned but rather given to the Persian commanders who successfully conquered Mytilene. Darius III meanwhile was preparing a ground offensive and raised an army under his personal leadership. Alexander attempted to come within striking distance of Phoenician cities as quickly as possible. Darius must have perceived his plan, because he likewise rushed to cross the Taurus and reach Phoenicia with great speed. In November 333 BCE, both the Great King and Alexander met directly in battle for the first time. The famous Battle of Issus ended in a catastrophe for the Persians, despite their marked numerical superiority. A Macedonian assault under Alexander on the Persian center with the goal of eliminating the Great King himself led to his flight from the battle, which is naturally characterized as cowardice by Greek authors. The preservation of Achaemenid power was bound up in his personal survival, however, whether for the preservation of order (Wieshöfer 2006: p. 39) or from pure pragmatism, since a power vacuum would have been created after his death without a recognizable legitimate heir. The Persian army was demoralized after the flight of its commander and retreated. Alexander captured not only great riches but also members of Darius' family. Whether these hostages prevented a further attack by Darius or whether he hoped to raise troops for a longer period of time is impossible to say. At any rate, Darius entered negotiations with Alexander, in which he ultimately proposed surrendering territory up to the Euphrates, but Alexander rejected all such offers.

The Great King did not hinder Alexander's march over Phoenicia and Syria to Egypt but rather used the time to raise greater numbers of troops and apparently waited until Alexander would attack. Alexander crossed the Euphrates in summer 331 BCE and the Tigris soon after. Darius III offered Alexander a decisive battle north of Arbela (Arbil, today in northern Iraq) on the plain of Gaugamela, which Alexander accepted (October 331 BCE). The Persian army was numerically superior and the battlefield well suited for Persian troops. Alexander's advantage, however, lay in the shock force of his well trained and, after several years of campaigning together, well-coordinated soldiers, who proved superior in the battle. Again, as at Issus, Alexander allegedly made a daring direct attack on the center of the Persian forces in order to encounter the Great King directly. Darius was again forced to flee, despite the fact that the battle had gone largely in his favor. Just as after Issus, a second Persian army assembled from throughout the empire had been utterly defeated, so that the resources of the Achaemenid Empire were certainly

strained. Darius' inability to secure a victory may also have called his legitimacy into question (Wiesehöfer 1998: pp. 58–59). The subsequent capture and murder of the Great King in retreat before Alexander's advance by the satrap Bessus (July 330 BCE), who – as a member of the Achaemenid dynasty – proclaimed himself Darius' successor (Artaxerxes V), were ultimately the consequences of this multitude of failures.

Alexander and his troops reached Babylon and took Susa without resistance. He then pushed into the Persian heartland toward the important Achaemenid residences Persepolis and Pasargadae. Darius could not stop his advance and was forced to flee ever further east before Alexander. The Greek authors embellish Darius' end (Diodorus knows a version in which Alexander encounters Darius clinging to life and promises him revenge on Bessus). Most of these stories appear to have no historical basis whatsoever.

Alexander is supposed to have buried Darius III in the royal crypt in Persepolis as an act of reverence (so e.g. Arr. 3.22.1–2). The site of the grave has not yet been identified. Even if we lack reliable information on the details, Alexander nonetheless seems to have been concerned to represent himself as successor to the Achaemenid kings.

Achaemenid rule ended with the death of Darius III. Bessus established a kingdom in several eastern satrapies. In the course of Alexander's conquest of these areas, Bessus was captured and delivered to Alexander (Arr. 3.28–30; 4.7.3). After Alexander ordered the usurper to be mutilated (again playing the part of the legitimate successor), Bessus was delivered to the son of Darius III, who ordered him to be killed.

Alexander would have to fight incessantly for another six years before he could make the entire Persian Empire his own. Alexander's victories are attributed in the ancient sources more or less exclusively to the catastrophic state of the Persian Empire and its weak, barbarian rulers. This brief overview, however, reveals that the Persian Empire from the time of Darius II to Darius III was not enveloped in constant decadence. Precisely under Artaxerxes II and III, the Achaemenid Empire attained power and influence that rivaled the empire of Darius I. Whether Alexander was a more capable general than Agesilaus at the beginning of the fourth century and simultaneously was the "catastrophe" that brought an end to the Achaemenid Empire has been the subject of many publications. The answer to this question depends on many factors, among which, however, fundamental structural weakness of the Persian Empire may be ruled out. The very fact that Alexander essentially imitated the Achaemenid administration of the enormous empire and found himself confronted by relatively independent satraps in Asia Minor after his lengthy campaigns in the east clearly demonstrate that these problems were not inherent in Persian rule. Maintaining control over so large a territory under ancient conditions was extremely precarious.

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CHAPTER 33

The Conquest by Alexander

Krzysztof Nawotka

The principal facts of Alexander's conquest of the Achaemenid Empire can be ascertained with a high degree of probability. The limitations of the seemingly copious source basis, however, make understanding Alexander's motives sometimes difficult. A case in point is the perennial scholarly debate (Seibert 1998) on why Alexander decided to take on the much more powerful neighbor whose comparative military strength had been recently underscored by the setbacks suffered by Alexander's father Philip II on the eastern front: in 340 BCE in his attempts to take Perinthus and Byzantium, supplied with money, soldiers, and war materials by Persian satraps, and in 336–335 BCE in the defeat inflicted by the small mercenary corps on Persian pay led by Memnon of Rhodes on the Macedonian army dispatched by Philip II to Asia Minor. Philip's failure to sway the satrap of Caria, Pixodarus, to his side was another testimony to the cohesiveness of the Achaemenid Empire. The conspicuous silence of ancient sources as to Alexander's motives and objectives may to a degree reflect the lack of discussion among his circle of power as to whether to start war. To put it in Tarn's words: "The primary reason why Alexander invaded Persia was, no doubt, that he never thought of not doing it; it was his inheritance." (Tarn 1948: I, p. 8). War with Persia was certainly Philip's idea taken over by Alexander. The original war aims were probably limited to western Asia Minor, as reflected in the territorial concession Darius III was willing to make to Alexander after Issus when he offered to his opponent the land to the west of the river Halys (Müller 2016: pp. 268, 286).

Alexander's army marched from Macedonia in March 334 BCE to cross the Hellespont about a month later, retracing in the reverse order the route once taken by Xerxes in his invasion of Greece. The ancient authors give the strength of Alexander's army at between 30 000 infantry and 4000 cavalry and 43 000 infantry and 5100 cavalry, supported by 160 ships. The beginning of war was heavily laden with the symbolism of conquest, perennial conflict between Europe and Asia, and the Panhellenic revenge for Persian sacrilege of the years 480–479 BCE (Zahrnt 1996; Seibert 1998). Darius III did not lead his army personally, nor did he appoint a high-caliber general to command the Persian forces in Asia Minor, leaving to the local satraps conducting the war. The first clash on the river Granicus in May 334 BCE proved calamitous to the Persian cause in Asia Minor, depriving it of most of its fighting force and of its aristocratic leadership slaughtered by the Macedonian Companion cavalry. Alexander's first victory in this war was due to his military genius as much as to the weak and complacent Persian leadership, in the first place of Arsites, the satrap of Hellespontine Phrygia and the Persian commander-in-chief by virtue of conducting war in his satrapy (Badian 1977). Not only did he allow the invading army to cross the Hellespont unopposed but he also decided to fight the superior enemy forces against the advice of Memnon of Rhodes, the best general on the Persian side, on the Granicus sidelined to lead a small cavalry detachment raised from his land in Troad (McCoy 1989).

The battle of the Granicus gave Alexander a free hand to conduct operations in Asia Minor, while the treasury of Sardis, the Persian capital of Asia Minor, surrendered by its commander Mithrenes, saved him from immediate bankruptcy. Decisions taken in Daskyleion, immediately after the battle of Granicus, in Sardis, and soon after, marked the principal tenets of Alexander's policy in the Persian Empire: he left estates of Iranian aristocrats untouched, he retained the Persian taxation and administrative structure, of course with new appointments to the top positions, and he let Mithrenes enjoy a position at his court similar to that which his aristocratic pedigree would have earned him with Darius III (Briant 1993). Although the fully fledged Alexander's orientalizing policy was to come later, this was the beginning of the trend to claim the Persian Empire as his legitimate possession, won with spear but ruled in accordance with the Achaemenid tradition.

From Sardis, Alexander marched to Ionia, where a democratic revolution broke out in Ephesus. Alexander put an end to the ensuing chaotic purge of pro-Persian oligarchs, while embassies from Magnesia and Tralleis surrendering their cities provided him with an opportunity to overthrow oligarchies throughout Ionia, Aeolis, and Caria, and to proclaim the return of democracy. Even if Alexander's primary objective was strategic, to acquire new Greek allies in the war against Darius III, the constitutional transformation in western Asia Minor, as reflected in local inscriptions, was profound, giving an impetus to the triumph of democracy in the Hellenistic world (Nawotka 2003).

By that time the Persian resistance stiffened with the appointment of Memnon of Rhodes to the supreme command in the Aegean. He planned a counteroffensive in the sea coupled with wearing down Macedonian forces with sieges of select fortresses in Asia Minor. His designs were farfetched: to stir war in continental Greece, forcing Alexander to abandon Asia Minor, repeating the successful Persian strategy of 394 BCE when the victorious Spartan king Agesilaus was forced to interrupt his campaign in Asia Minor to fight the Corinthian War in Greece. Alexander devoted most of the late summer and fall 334 BCE to besieging Miletus and Halicarnassus. Unsupported by Memnon's navy taken over by Alexander's ship in the race to its harbor, Miletus could not withstand the Macedonian siege engines. It was stormed by Alexander's troops but spared destruction certainly for ideological reasons since plundering it during the Panhellenic war with Persia would have smacked too much of what the Persians had done at the end of the Ionian Revolt in 494 BCE (Bosworth 1988: pp. 250–254). The battle for Miletus showed, nevertheless, that Alexander's navy could do little beyond hindering the enemy from entering the harbor it was occupying, while its upkeep was taking more than one third of Alexander's total war expenditure at this time (Le Rider 2003: pp. 103–117). The expensive navy was disbanded and from this moment Alexander was set on the strategy of defeating Memnon's naval forces by denying it access to all ports, continental at least. This necessitated the winter of 334/3 BCE campaign along the Mediterranean coast of Caria, Lycia, and Pamphylia. Before that Alexander had to take Halicarnassus, the former capital of Mausolus and a powerful fortress occupied by Memnon's army and navy. After a relentless siege and a few battles with the garrison troops making sorties, in the late fall 334 BCE Halicarnassus was abandoned by its defenders, with the exception of two citadels providing shelter to the Persian forces in Caria. During the siege of Halicarnassus, Alexander was approached by Ada, the sister of Mausolus, in 341/0 BCE deprived of her rule in Caria by Pixodarus and from that time hanging on to the fortress of Alinda. The aging princess adopted Alexander, who in turn appointed her satrap of Caria. This was the first example of Alexander's flexible policy in the east of adopting local customs and buying local support by leaving civil administration in the hands of native kings, princes, and notables while military command usually stayed with Macedonian officers, Ptolemaios in the case of Caria (Bosworth 1980: pp. 143–154).

From Halicarnassus the Macedonian army split in two: with Alexander moving to the coastal Caria and Lycia, the most senior Macedonian general Parmenio marched through Sardis to Greater Phrygia to defeat its satrap Atizyes and to deny other Persian generals an opportunity to mobilize a new army from among Iranian military colonists in this area. The winter campaign of 334/3 BCE reportedly brought Alexander as many as 30 cities all the way to Phaselis in east Lycia. In spring 334 BCE he occupied Pamphylia and next

his army headed north. Its march through Pisidia was marked by heavy fighting in the sieges of Termessus and Sagalassus. Then, by mixture of force and negotiation, he took Celaenae, the capital city of satraps of Greater Phrygia, to meet Parmenio in Gordium. By spring of 333 BCE a large part of western, southern, and central Asia Minor was in Macedonian hands.

The battle for Halicarnassus and the spring campaigns of Alexander and Parmenio did not end the Persian resistance in Asia Minor. The satrap of Caria, Orontobates, fought with Ptolemaios for control of Caria for most of 333 BCE while Mithropastes and Hydarnes were raising new armies in the north and producing mass quantities of coins in Sinope to pay for the war effort. A concentrated Persian counterattack could cut Alexander's lines of communications with the Aegean coast and Macedonia. After Issus, Persian forces in northern Asia Minor were strengthened by the troops who managed to flee the battlefield and fresh recruits from Paphlagonia and Cappadocia posing an even greater danger to Macedonian rule in this land. Fighting Persian armies in central Asia Minor was the principal task of the newly appointed satrap of Greater Phrygia, Antigonus Monophthalmus, later the leading figure of the Age of the Successors. Through the interior lines strategy, by the end of 332 BCE Antigonus managed to defeat Persian armies, reversing the immediate danger, but for all his efforts parts of Asia Minor stayed out of Macedonian control for the rest of Alexander's life (Briant 2002: p. 831). The greatest challenge to Alexander, however, was in the Aegean Sea, where in early 333 BCE the vast armada of Memnon retook many islands, getting close to bringing war to continental Greece. There is no evidence, however, that Persian forces in Asia Minor and in the Aegean coordinated their operations to impact decisively the course of war. The death of Memnon during the siege of Mytilene in summer 333 BCE hampered the Persian offensive in the Aegean. Drying up of resources, especially of coined money, further reduced the Persian war effort in the sea, and it stalled when in the fall of 333 BCE Darius III recalled Greek mercenaries from the navy and ordered them to join his army. The final blow to the Persian navy came the following year when successful Macedonian operations in Phoenicia made Phoenician squadrons abandon the Persian cause. By the end of that year all of the eastern Mediterranean was under Alexander's control (Debord 1999: pp. 454–463). By the end of summer 333 BCE Alexander conquered Greater Cappadocia, leaving aside the Pontic part of this land whose ruler or satrap, Ariarathes, remained independent. Then Alexander's army crossed the Taurus mountains, taking lowland Cilicia with Tarsus. The mountainous part of it stayed largely independent and the Macedonian satrap, Balacrus, soon met his death trying to conquer it.

It looks as though Darius III decided to assume command of his army late in the summer of 333 BCE after earlier plans of opening a new front in Greece

faltered with the death of Memnon. The Great King contemplated another sensible plan advocated by an Athenian exile, Charidemus, to conduct war through a mercenary-based army with professional leadership. The plan fizzled away with the execution of Charidemus, who had fallen victim to cultural misunderstanding, having indulged too much in free speech at the royal court. At this point Darius had to lead. His army – with gross exaggeration estimated by the ancient authors at 300 000–600 000 soldiers, among which were 30 000 Greek mercenaries – gathered in Babylon and through the late summer–fall of 333 BCE moved slowly to Syria and then to Cilicia. By early November 333 BCE the armies of Darius and Alexander found themselves separated by the Taurus, both, it seems, unaware of the enemy's whereabouts. Darius, probably in the futile hope of catching by surprise and defeating two corps of the Macedonian army, made to the seacoast behind the enemy lines (Murison 1972). Alexander, now surrounded by Darius on land and by the Persian navy on sea, had to make a hasty return from Syria to fight a battle on the river Pinarus, now Payas (Hammond 1996: pp. 97–101), traditionally called the battle of Issus. The feared Macedonian phalanx stumbled in its charge against the Greek hoplites on Persian pay, but the superior Companion cavalry and Alexander's spirited leadership saved the day, breaking the enemy line in the place where the Great King stood. Darius fled the battlefield, not quite for fear but to spare his empire inevitable chaos if he had been killed in the battle (Nylander 1993, Müller 2016: p. 285). Much of the Persian forces left the battlefield in good order to fight other battles in Asia Minor, Egypt, Crete, Peloponnese, and Gaugamela. Nevertheless, Alexander's victory was complete: he defeated far superior enemy forces, took possession of enormous riches in the Persian baggage train here and in Damascus, and above all captured the most valuable hostages: the family of Darius III who had accompanied him to Issus.

Issus also provided Alexander with the unique freedom in choosing his strategy: either to pursue Darius to Babylon or to turn west in the direction of Syria and Egypt. He wisely chose the latter, delaying the final victory by a year or two but precluding any diversion behind his lines. Soon after the battle of Issus, Alexander's army moved to Phoenicia, an enormously important land of autonomous city-states fielding most ships for the Persian navy. Most Phoenician cities, beginning with the northernmost Aradus, surrendered without a fight. Some of the Phoenician rulers were removed – one, Abdashtart III of Sidon, was executed – but the local autonomous monarchy was retained, now of course reporting to the new satrap appointed by Alexander. By early February 332 BCE the Macedonians reached the strongest city in the region, Tyre. Prompted by religious rather than political considerations, it was the sole city to offer resistance (Amitay 2008), which led to the most epic siege in Alexander's history, lasting six months and involving some of the most daring engineering achievements of antiquity. Overwhelmed

by the naval might of all other Phoenician, Cypriot, and Greek navies now on Alexander's side, Tyre fell in August 332 BCE to a Macedonian assault followed by the slaughter reportedly of 8000–10 000 people and the enslavement of another 13 000.

Alexander's long stay in Phoenicia was marked with diplomatic activity, too. Through it he won the allegiance of autonomous statelets in Palestine, Judea, and Samaria, perhaps paying a short visit to Jerusalem (Nawotka 2010: pp. 195–6). Potentially of far greater consequence were Darius' entreaties to make peace with Alexander. Two embassies from the Great King showed up, the first in Marathus, immediately after the battle of Issus, and the second during the siege of Tyre. Conflicting reports of ancient authors make the reconstruction of peace negotiations hypothetical. What is sure is that Darius requested peace and the safe return of his family, offering increasingly more in exchange. It seems that he began from a mere ransom, reportedly of 10 000 talents, in the second stage agreeing to cede land in Asia Minor to the west of the river Halys. On top of that he made unprecedented offers of friendship, i.e. *de facto* recognition of the equal status of both monarchs. After some intense discussion with his advisors, Alexander rejected the peace offer, preferring to decide the outcome of the war on the battlefield (Briant 2002: pp. 832–840).

From Tyre the Macedonian army marched in the direction of Egypt, with one notable stopover at Gaza taken by storm after a two-month long siege. Egypt, on the contrary, offered practically no opposition and with that capitulation all of the eastern Mediterranean was in Alexander's hands. In Egypt Alexander successfully played pharaoh, having sacrificed to Apis and other gods, commissioning construction work in temples and assuming all royal titles and the double crown (Wojciechowska and Nawotka 2014). He preserved the basic administrative structure inherited from the times of the Saite dynasty, making sure, however, that the real power, administrative and military alike, was split among a number of Macedonians, Greeks, and natives, the most prominent of whom was the chief of finance, Cleomenes of Naucratis (Le Rider 2003: pp. 238–262).

In late spring 331 BCE Alexander's army set off from Egypt to reach the Tigris in the second half of September. Since Alexander rejected Darius' third peace offer, the fate of the Persian Empire had to be decided in battle. The Persian army was numerically superior, although far smaller than 1 400 000, Arrian would like us to believe, and this time it was Darius who chose the battlefield of Gaugamela, broad enough for his forces to deploy freely. The battle was fought on October 1st 331 BCE. Again, despite some initial success for the Persians, a relentless charge of the Companion cavalry led by Alexander broke through the enemy line, forcing Darius to flee and all of his army followed suit. Alexander's decisive victory was followed by his proclamation as king of Asia, i.e. the ruler of the Persian Empire (Nawotka 2012). Again he did not pursue Darius, preferring the methodical conquest of the heartland of

his empire. On 21 October that year, after intense negotiations, Alexander entered Babylon and was greeted by its population as their legitimate king (Kuhrt 1990). Mazaeus, a noble Persian, who distinguished himself at Gaugamela, was appointed satrap of Babirus and this started a new trend: from this point most people elevated to satrapal posts by the new king of Asia were noble Iranians. Next to surrender and to be reappointed was the satrap of Susa Abulites. Having broken the last line of Persian resistance in the Persian Gates, in January 330 BCE Alexander occupied Persepolis. With Susa and Persepolis Alexander got hold of the fabulous riches of the Persian Empire, estimated by ancient authors at 170 000 talents. The winter sojourn in Parsa was filled with attempts first to win over inhabitants of this Achaemenid heartland and when this failed, to break their opposition with terror, culminating in the burning of the palaces in Persepolis in May 330 BCE (Bloedow and Loube 1997; Shahbazi 2003).

Unable to gather another army, Darius fled his temporal capital of Ecbatana in the direction of eastern Iran. He never reached it, being arrested by his senior advisors in a desperate move to avert the wrath of gods by instituting a substitute king. Darius was killed by them when the Macedonian pursuit was dangerously close. This prevented Alexander from capturing Darius to make him abdicate in his favor, thus strengthening Alexander's credentials as king of Persia (Nylander 1993). Hence in July 330 BCE there were still two kings of Asia: Alexander and Artaxerxes V or Bessus the satrap of Bactria and Sogdiana. The death of Darius marked the end of the Panhellenic war, Greek allied soldiers were honorably discharged, but most of them continued to serve as Alexander's mercenaries. Before dealing with Bessus, Alexander turned west to consolidate his control of Media and Hyrcania. There, in Zadracarta, he established his Persian royal court to which flocked Iranian aristocrats, clearly giving preference to Alexander over Bessus/Artaxerxes V. The most prominent of them was Oxyathres, Darius' younger brother, made a king's companion (Spawforth 2007).

The next objective was Bactria of Bessus. But earlier, in fall 330 BCE, alerted by the revolt of Satibarzanes, the satrap of Areia, Alexander had to turn back to retake Areia and to put Drangiana and Arachosia under his control. The neighboring Gedrosia surrendered without fight in winter 330/329 BCE. Troubles in Areia lasted until winter 328/7 BCE, however. In late winter 329 BCE Alexander's army marched through Kandahar to Kabul Valley to cross the Hindu Kush, possibly by the Sawak Pass, by May 329 BCE. Bessus, unable to offer effective resistance, was soon handed over by his allies to Alexander, who in turn released him to Oxyathres. He, in front of Persian and Median notables gathered in Ecbatana, presided over the execution of the regicide. Despite this initial success, the conquest of Bactria and Sogdiana was a challenge. Attempting to base his rule on garrisons and newly established Greek cities, Alexander disturbed the traditional social structures and balance of power in central Asia,

leading to two years of fierce fighting. His most formidable enemy was Spitamenes, long enjoying the support of the Scythians from across the Jaxartes. Neither his death in 328 BCE nor the campaign of terror could produce the desired result of bringing Bactria and Sogdiana into Alexander's fold. All changed in spring 327 BCE with new tactics of showing mercy to the defeated Bactrian and Sogdian lords, who were now offered the chance to continue to rule their subjects in return for paying respect to the new king of Asia. One of them was Oxyartes, whose daughter, Rhoxane, married Alexander in spring 327 BCE. The combination of leniency, Greek colonies mostly settled with veterans, and strong garrisons planted throughout Bactria and Sogdiana pacified this land in 327 BCE, effectively bringing all of the Achaemenid-Persian Empire under Alexander's control (Holt 1988). His expedition to India, although partially motivated by the tradition of Persian rule in the Indus Valley under Darius I, in 327–325 BCE, was clearly going beyond the reach of the Achaemenid Empire, in search of the end of the inhabited Earth.

During his conquests Alexander played many roles: the liberator of the Greeks of Asia, pharaoh of Egypt, king of Babylon, and above all the Persian king. With first hints at it in his letter to Darius, he proclaimed himself king of Asia at Gaugamela to defend his status in the relentless pursuit of Darius III and the rival king Bessus/Artaxerxes V. Iranian aristocrats received positions at Alexander's court from spring 334 BCE while four years later most trappings of a Great King, including Persian court, guards, and royal attire, were adopted. An attempt to move a step further was taken in 327 BCE when Alexander tried and failed to unify his court in the eastern ceremonial of proskynesis. Then came the wedding at Susa in 324 BCE when, with Alexander's encouragement, about 90 of his Greek and Macedonian companions married Iranian princesses. Certainly it was Alexander's design to crown the conquest by unifying the elite of the leading peoples of his empire, which after his death was to be ruled by his half-Iranian son.

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SECTION IV.C

UNDER PERSIAN RULE

CHAPTER 34

Pārsa and Ūja

Ali Mousavi and Touraj Daryaei

The Center of the Empire

In the *dahyāva* lists of the Achaemenid royal inscriptions, the entries Pārsa and Ūja represent the heartland of the Persian Empire. Geographically the names of these two provinces describe the historic territory that, transcending the Zagros mountains, included Khuzestān, the lowlands on the eastern flank of Mesopotamia, as well as the region of modern Fārs on the Iranian plateau. In a broader sense the center of the empire also included Media and Babylonia, the *dahyāva* Māda and Bābiruš, in whose capitals Ecbatana and Babylon building activities of the Achaemenids are attested. As far as archeological examination allows for conclusions, however, the extent of construction work there is not comparable to the ambitious embodiment that made various places of Pārsa and Susa in Ūja representative centers of the empire (cf. Chapter 70 The Residences). Especially under Darius who started building activities at Susa and Persepolis at about the same time (for an early dating of planning and building also at Persepolis see Jacobs 1997, esp. pp. 298–299), the old highland–lowland duality of pre-Achaemenid epochs, most clearly expressed by the Middle-Elamite title “King of Anšan and Susa,” experienced a rebirth (Henkelman 2017: p. 113).

Source Problems

When dealing with the history of Pārsa and Ūja during Achaemenid times we face a characteristic source problem: From the various archives, above all the Persepolis Fortification Archive, we are quite well informed about lasting conditions, i.e. the regional administration (see recently Henkelman 2017; cf. Chapter 62 Persia) and religious practices (cf. Chapter 85 The Heartland Pantheon; Chapter 86 Practice of Worship in the Achaemenid Heartland). Archeological findings and secondary sources give us an idea of Achaemenid architecture and figurative and ornamental endowment of buildings (cf. Chapter 70 The Residences and Chapter 94 Statuary and Relief), of life at the Achaemenid court (cf. Chapter 71 The Court), and of banquets, feasting, and gift exchange (cf. Chapter 73 Banquet and Gift Exchange). About specific events, however, we are informed only in a few instances, this due to the well-known gradual decline of information from west to east as far as Greek and Roman narrative sources are concerned.

Specific Events

Persian rule in the present context begins with Cyrus taking a leading role among local rulers and chieftains in the region and assuming the title King of Anšan to underline his claim to leadership. His successes, beginning with the victory against the Median king Astyages/Ištumegu, found a representative expression in the foundation of Pasargadae, a place about 80 km north of the old city of Anšan, as new capital of the kingdom around the middle of the sixth century BCE. At Anšan, a dignified center of old, no significant remains which could be termed Achaemenid have been found so far. The construction of a new capital is significant in that it bespeaks the new king's desire to depart from the traditional dynastic locality. Classical sources inform us that the reason for erecting Pasargadae at its special place may have been the fact that Astyages' defeat by Cyrus probably took place nearby (Strabo 15.3.8; on Pasargadae as capital of the first world empire, see Humbach 2003: p. 112).

Pārsa and Ūja were heavily affected by the unrest of the years 522–520/19 BCE (cf. Chapter 30 Imperial Crisis), which the empire experienced after the death of Cambyses. The crisis was caused by the rebellion of a certain Gaumāta, a magus who proclaimed himself king pretending that he was Bardiya, the second son of Cyrus. The unrest continued for a few months until in September 522 BCE Darius, a member of another Persian family, slew Gaumāta and ascended to the throne (DB §§ 10–15). According to the Bisotun inscriptions, a certain Vahyazdāta, who also called himself Bardiya, rose against Darius from a location named *Paīsiyāhuvādā* in Fārs (Dandamaev 1989:

p. 95). Initially, Vahyazdāta was successful in his effort because, as we are informed by the Bisotun inscription, many in Fārs sided with him. He claimed to be king (DB § 40), and was able to stretch his power all the way to the east to Arachosia (Dandamaev 1989: p. 116). Darius responded by sending an army to fight the new king, first in Arachosia and then in Fārs. There were several battles, first in Rakha, where Darius' commander, Artavardiya, was not able to completely defeat Vahyazdāta. During the second battle near Mt. Parga in Fārs, Darius' *bandaka* was victorious and the rebel leader and many of his forces were either killed or arrested. Vahyazdāta along with 52 of his followers were killed in Fārs at a location called Uvādaicaya, probably Elamite Matezziš (DB §§ 41–44; Dandamaev 1989: pp. 116–117).

Darius also faced several revolts in Ūja, the last one headed by a man named Aθamaita (DB § 71). This Aθamaita has tentatively been identified by some with Atta-hamiti-inšušinak (Tavernier 2004: pp. 3, 5–6, 22–29; Potts 2010: p. 133), who is known from a stele whose fragments were found at Susa (Potts 1999: p. 298 Pl. 8.1; Potts 2010: pp. 134–135 Pl. 1–2). If this identification is correct, we may think of him as a vassal ruler, probably installed by Cyrus or Cambyses, who, after his defeat, was replaced by an official. This official may already have been Bakabana, well known from the Persepolis Fortification Archive and, with all probability, satrap of Ūja. If the identification is to be rejected, Bakabana should have had one or more predecessors in his position as satrap and Aθamaita should be regarded as a short-lived rebel.

One of the few specific events in the heart of the empire of which we learn from the sources was the struggle between Xerxes and his half-brother, Artobarzanes, for the succession of Darius. That Herodotus' report, which is the most detailed on this contention (Hdt. 7.2–3), has a historic background is confirmed by the fact that Xerxes apparently alludes to it in one of his inscriptions (XPf §3; Jacobs 2014: pp. 347–348) and that both claimants figure in the Persepolis Fortification Archive (i.a. PF-NN 1657; PF 2052).

Another specific event that puts the province of Fārs at the center of attention is the conquest of Alexander and the destruction of Persepolis. After the defeat of Darius III at Gaugamela, the Persian general Ariobarzanes retreated into the Zagros to protect the province of Fārs and its ceremonial centers. Ariobarzanes chose a gorge which came to be known as the Persian Gates. The figures for the number of Persian soldiers vary, depending on the reporter. According to Arrian's account there were some 40 000 infantry and about 700 horsemen (Arr. Anab. 3.18.2). After an initial setback Alexander was able to circumvent the Persian forces and surprise Ariobarzanes. The battle is described as fierce fighting and many Persians fell in combat or from the gorge: "Unarmed men grappled with men who were armed, dragging them to the ground by virtue of their bodily weight and stabbing many with their own weapons" (Curtius 5.4.32). It appears that Ariobarzanes along with 40

cavalrymen and 5000 infantry was able to break through Alexander's forces and get to Persepolis. However, Tiridates, who was in charge of Persepolis, did not let him enter and so Ariobarzanes and his forces put up a battle to the end (Curtius 5.4.33–4).

Alexander and his forces then entered Persepolis, sacked the city and killed its inhabitants, but ordered that the citadel, the palatial buildings on the stone Terrace, was not to be destroyed. The conqueror then took tons of gold and silver from the treasury (120 000 talents), staging games and sacrificial ceremonies in celebration of his victory. The wealth of the Persian Empire was also housed at Persepolis, only to be followed by Pasargadae (6000 talents) (Curt. 5.6.9–10). After four months of stay, Alexander decided to burn the palaces at Persepolis. Reports vary as to the reason for the burning of the city, whether it was done purposefully or was an accident (for a full discussion, see Mousavi 2012: Chapter II). Whatever the truth may be, it is clear that the symbolic heart of the Persian Empire stopped beating, and with this event, resistance on an imperial scale to the Greco-Macedonian conquerors was futile. While Cyrus the Great's victory at Pasargadae marked the advent of the Persian Empire, Alexander's destruction of Persepolis brought an end to the symbolic importance of Fārs, at least for 500 years.

What is otherwise reported by classical authors about the Persian heartland between the times of Darius I and Darius III is for the most part located at the court and is often more storytelling than historiography. Bichler (2010) has pointed to the fact that figures we encounter in Herodotus' *Historiae* give the impression of acting on a stage rather than at the Achaemenid court. This is especially true for information quoted as coming from Ctesias. In the picture drafted by Ctesias, intrigues and murder are commonplace, and traits of despotism and distorted gender roles are among the most formative characteristics (cf. Rollinger 2010).

The Designing of the Imperial Center

The sources – primary and secondary written sources as well as archeological findings – that inform us as to how Pārsa and Ūja developed as the center of a world empire are more complex and reliable. Cyrus' victories in Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, and the east, and Cambyses' conquest of Egypt, introduced an exceptional craftsmanship to Persia. The buildings at Pasargadae and Borazjan (in southern Fārs), at Susa, and at Persepolis bear the marks of architects, artists, and craftsmen from Ionia, Lydia, Babylonia, Assyria, Elam, the Levant, Egypt, and others. Nylander's studies on the stoneworking techniques and architectural features have demonstrated, for Pasargadae, considerable western influence in the construction of the royal buildings (Nylander 1970).

Boardman's research on archeological evidence for western influence in Persia has broadened the spectrum of participating nations (Boardman 2000). Primary sources from Babylonia attesting the employment of Babylonian workers at the royal site of Matannan in Persia supplement the picture (Henkelman and Kleber 2007; Tolini 2011: pp. 94–95; Zadok 2011a: p. 130; 2011b). Taken together the evidence parallels to a certain degree Darius' inscriptions *f* and *z* from Susa, where he numbers the nations that took part in the erection of his palace there (DSf §§7–13; DSz §§7–12). The external influence is never predominant, however, and the finished buildings can “only and rightly be termed Iranian, Achaemenid art” (Nylander 1970: p. 148).

Pārsa was the ancestral homeland of the royal house. Here the sources localize the beginning of each king's rule and here the royal tombs were erected. So Pasargadae is to be named if Plutarch is right when stating that it was the location of a ceremony to be performed by the new king to be accepted as legitimate ruler and, ultimately, successor of Cyrus. According to Plutarch, the chosen one had to make a trip to Pasargadae where he received royal initiation at the hands of the Magi (Plut. Artax. 3.1–2):

A little while after the death of Darius (II), the new king made an expedition to Pasargadae, that he might receive the royal initiation at the hands of the Persian priests. Here there is a sanctuary of a warlike goddess whom one might conjecture to be Athena. Into this sanctuary the candidate for initiation must pass, and after laying aside his own proper robe, must put on that which Cyrus the Elder used to wear before he became king; then he must eat of a cake of figs, chew some turpentine-wood, and drink a cup of sour milk. (Transl. B. Perrin)

Admittedly, the reliability of this report was contested and the initiation ceremony rejected as an historical reality (Binder 2010); the question as to whether Plutarch's report is authentic is so far unanswered. We stay on safer ground regarding the localization of the tomb of Cyrus the Great at Pasargadae (Arr. Anab. 6.29.4–6). Stronach convincingly summarized the arguments for the identification of the famous gabled hut at Pasargadae as Cyrus' last resting place (Stronach 1978: pp. 24–26). After the king's death, his body must have been taken back there for the funeral. This becomes clear from Arrian, who tells us that when Alexander of Macedon was coming back from India and stopped at Pasargadae, he saw that Cyrus' tomb had been ravaged and that the body of the king had been thrown out of the sarcophagus (Arr. Anab. 6.29.9). In the same context Arrian provides us with the description of a religious ceremony which had taken place at the tomb during the whole Achaemenid period. Nearby there was a small building for the Magi who guarded the burial house. For the priests, a sheep a day and rations of flour and wine were allocated, and for the performance of a sacrificial act at the

tomb a horse was given each month by the ruling king in order to be sacrificed to Cyrus (Arr. Anab. 6.29.7).

Also the successional kings were buried in Pārsa: Cambyses, the son of Cyrus, was laid to rest at Nīrīz in southeastern Fārs (Henkelman 2003: pp. 144–145). Another member of the royal house, possibly Hystaspes, may have been entombed in the Takht-e Rostam on the Marvdašt plain (Hystaspes as tomb owner was proposed by Henkelman 2003: p. 158; cf. the older approaches to date this monument in Kleiss 1971 and Stronach 1978: pp. 302–304; an overview of datings and attempts to name the deceased buried here is given by Bessac and Boucharlat 2010). The Achaemenid kings from Darius I onward found their last resting places in the dynastic funerary ensembles at Naqš-e Rostam and Persepolis (on the problems of religious and cultural continuity from Cyrus to Darius I, see Jacobs 2010).

As at the tomb of Cyrus, at the other places sacrifices for the dead kings seem to have been offered. In the Persepolis Fortification Archive, allocations for the *šumar* of Cambyses are documented (Henkelman 2003), and architectural remains in front of the rock-cut tombs at Persepolis may be remnants of installations for the performance of ritual acts for the rulers who were entombed there. Whether the Ka'abe-ye Zardošt at Naqš-e Rostam had a function in a similar context is uncertain (Schmidt 1970: pp. 44–49; Frye 1974: p. 386; Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1983). The royal graves were an important element that made Pārsa the undisputed ceremonial and commemorative heartland of the Persian Empire.

From the time of Darius I, Persepolis and Susa were the most important centers of the empire. They were both preferential destinations for travelers from the whole empire (Briant 2010: pp. 34–37 tabl. 1; Henkelman 2017: pp. 114–115) and linked by an important road connection (on its course and way stations, see Koch 1986; Arfa'i 1999; Potts 2008). According to Neo-Babylonian and Elamite sources, both cities and their surroundings attracted foreign workforces. The Babylonian documents repeatedly report the deployment of Babylonian and other workers to Elam and Persis. At both destinations also businessmen from Babylonia were present (Waerzeggers 2010; Zadok 2011a: pp. 128–136, 2011b).

Termed “capitals” in the Classical sources, Persepolis and Susa are, to a certain extent, similar and dissimilar. One may think, on the one hand, of the freestanding gates and the great hypostyle reception halls here and there, and on the other hand, point to the palace building at Susa, which does not find any parallel at Persepolis (see Chapter 70 The Residences). So, albeit both places were seats of a regional administration (for a “Susa Fortification Archive” cf. Henkelman 2017: pp. 115–126), their general function is debated. Regarding Persepolis, Mousavi pointed to its role as a location for ceremonies and ritual (Mousavi 2012: p. 10), and argued that its designation

as a palace complex along with the city of Persepolis does not do justice to all its functions. It was Lentz who proposed the tantalizing thesis that Persepolis had a cosmic function, with a specific design plan for astronomical observation (Lentz 1972: p. 289). More recently, the possible religious function of Persepolis has also been suggested. The idea is that the *tacara* of Darius and the *hadiš* of Xerxes provide important iconography, where some of the bearers of objects and animals could be priests. Thus, these figures may be participating in a ritual sacrifice and sacred ceremonies (Curtis and Razmjou 2005: p. 54). Razmjou believes that Persepolis was a center for religious ceremonies, thus the place was not solely residential (Razmjou 2010: p. 244). A similar view was taken by Root, who recommends broadening our understanding of what should be termed a temple and assigns religious functions to some palaces at Persepolis (Root 2010: esp. pp. 172–176, 207–208).

Susa, meanwhile, in recent years has repeatedly been characterized as the virtual capital of the empire. Its outstanding importance becomes apparent, i.a. from the fact that Babylonian representatives from the late sixth century BCE onward used to travel to Susa to manage Babylonia's tax obligations. In this context labor and commodities were transferred from there to the empire's center (Waerzeggers 2010; Tolini 2011: esp. pp. 307–334). The logistic problems that arose in this context, especially the problem of transportation, were overcome to ensure adequate supply of foodstuffs during comparably long sojourns of the court at Susa which could not be warranted by the city and its hinterland alone (Henkelman 2017: pp. 113–114, 123–129).

Special ceremonies (Elamite *šip*) that were held in Fārs, and in which either the king himself or the king's representative took part, again put a lot of emphasis on this province. The locations which were venues for these festivities included, according to the Persepolis Fortification tablets, Appištāpdan, Batrakataš (Pasargadae), Išgi, and Pumu, all in or close to the Fārs province (Henkelman 2011: pp. 98–99). Xerxes performed such a ceremony personally (XPh_c 30, 32–34, 41, 44), while at other times Parnakka or Ziššawiš could act as representatives of his predecessor (Henkelman 2011: p. 119). These festivals illustrate the special status of the imperial center that arose from the historic development and the provenience of the ruling dynasty.

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CHAPTER 35

Media

Bruno Jacobs

In the fifties of the sixth century BCE the Median king Astyages lost the historical struggle with Cyrus, king of Anšan (on Anšan and its dynasty see Chapter 28 Elamite Traditions), and Media fell to the latter. The size and political structure of this political entity are debated (see Chapter 25 The Median Dilemma), but it must have given shape to the Achaemenid province of Media and it must have become an essential basis for Cyrus' immense extension of power in the years to come (Waters 2010; cf. the thoughtful argumentation of Rossi 2010: pp. 310–316).

Remarks on Media's Position in the Achaemenid Empire and on Median Ethnicity

Among the provinces of the Achaemenid Empire the land (*dahyu-*) Māda / Media seems to have played a privileged role. In lists of those countries, as given in Achaemenid inscriptions, and in pictorial representations of them Māda is – with the exception of the Bisotun list (§ 6) – always understood as forming the center of the empire together with Pārsa and Ūja (Vogelsang 1986: pp. 131–133; cf. Briant 1996: pp. 185–194) and wordings like “Persia,

Media and the other countries” (DB §§ 10–12; DPg §§ 1–2) distinguish Media from all other provinces of the empire. Formulations in classical sources which likewise contrast Persians and Medes with all other inhabitants of the empire sound like an echo of that phrase (Hdt. 8.89). Persons of Median origin were, besides Persians, the only ones who had access to highest ranks at court (Briant 1996: p. 93). This prestigious position of Medes in the imperial hierarchy may have been one of the factors that led to “Medes” and “Persians” being treated as broadly synonymous in western sources (generally on that topic Tuplin 1994: pp. 235–237). Another hint of their special status may be the fact that from about the fifth month of the first year of Xerxes onwards in Babylonian documents the title “King of Persia and Media” is used with various modifications (Tuplin 1994: p. 256; Rollinger 1998: pp. 355–356 and 371).

All of this seems to be in marked contrast with Herodotus and Xenophon who suggest a deep rooted ethnic opposition between Persians and Medes. Xenophon’s *Cyropaedia* presents a confrontation between the Medes, who enjoy great power but have succumbed to a life of luxury, and the Persians, a people of modest origins but great ambition (Tuplin 2003: p. 354). Herodotus turns the rebellion of the magus¹ Gaumāta into a Median counterrevolution against the above-mentioned shift of power from the Mede Astyages to Cyrus. A literary key-element of this conception is the demand put forward by Cambyses on his deathbed, to wrest power from the usurper and not to let it fall back again to the Medes (Hdt. 3.65). If there was really such deep-rooted antagonism between Mede and Persian in the time of Cyrus and Cambyses, the privileged position enjoyed by the Medes only a short time later would have to be the result of an implausibly swift change of conditions after the end of the imperial crisis. In fact, the circumstances surrounding Darius’ struggle for power make it apparent that an ethnic opposition of this sort did not exist.

A remark made by Darius in the Bisotun inscription (DB §13) gives an important hint in this direction. Justifying his commitment to the struggle for the throne, he complains: “There was no man, neither a Persian nor a Mede nor anyone of our family, who might have been able to despoil that Gaumāta the *maguš* of the kingship.” Apparently it seemed obvious to him that not only a Persian but also a Mede might have taken the initiative to protect the interests of the legitimate claimants to the crown, i.e. the Achaemenids (Jacobs 2011: p. 648).

During the subsequent battles against the “Lying kings” the dividing line between Darius and his enemies cut across the distinction between “Medes” and “Persians.” Even while the Median revolt described in the Bisotun inscription was still going on – the battles in Armenia, for instance, had still not been fought – Darius despatched troops against the Persian Vahyazdāta. As reported in the Babylonian version (DBbab §33), this man apparently had caused soldiers from Anšan to change sides and rebel against Darius. A small section of this

force which had remained loyal and a Median contingent were now sent by Darius against his Persian opponent. With the remaining Persian troops Darius himself marched against Media (DBab §34; cf. DB §41; see also the translation in Lecoq 1997: pp. 202–203). Although “Median” and “Persian” in this context are rather to be understood as administrative than as ethnic terms, the situation nevertheless makes it obvious that ethnic affiliation did not define which master was obeyed in these cases. The same already applied to the struggle of Cyrus against Astyages: “(Astyages) mustered (his army) and marched against Cyrus, king of Anshan, for conquest ... The army rebelled against Astyages and he was taken prisoner. Th[ey handed him over] to Cyrus ...” (Grayson 1975: p. 106). This description stems from the so-called Nabonidus Chronicle, a text from Achaemenid times, which may be idealizing the decisive event from a Persian point of view. But, if the statement is basically true, it seems that serving a Persian master was no problem for Median soldiers in those days, or in other words: there was no opposition based on ethnic difference.

Such an opposition can also not be upheld on the basis of an ethno-linguistical definition that has Persians speaking “Persian” and Medes speaking “Median”: this was recently convincingly demonstrated by A. Rossi (Rossi 2010; cf. Windfuhr 2006: p. 384), the evidence being the Achaemenid inscriptions themselves with their “interdialectal koiné” (Rossi 2010: pp. 320–321; cf. already Lecoq 1974).

Administering Media

Cyrus is said by Xenophon to have appointed his son Tanaoxares as satrap of Media, Armenia and the territory of the Cadusians (Xen. Cyr. 8.7.11). In the problematic final section of the *Anabasis*, a satrap of Media named Arbaces is mentioned (Xen. Anab. 7.8.25). For the year 409 BCE the same author reports on an insurgence in that province (Xen. Hell. 1.2.19). Some additional information about Media as a satrapy of the Achaemenid Empire can be gained from sources which refer to the time of Alexander the Great. So a certain Bisthanes, son of Artaxerxes III, seems to have been satrap of the province when Alexander appeared on the scene (Arr. Anab. 3.19.4). But Strabo’s (11.13.1 [C 522/23]) confrontation of a *Greater Media* with a Media named *Atropatios* reflects a younger terminology, which sets the realm of Atropatene², which won independence under the leadership of the (sub-)satrap Atropates, in opposition to the Media which was conquered by Alexander and was later part of the Seleucid Empire (cf. Trogus in Just. Epit. 13.4.13). Both parts together, possibly also including Paraetacene (Xen. Anab. 2.4.27; 3.5.15; cf. Jacobs 1994: pp. 179–182; Tuplin 2003: pp. 358–360), should correspond approximately to *Māda* as listed in the catalogues of countries in the Achaemenid inscriptions.

A more extensive entity called *Media* seems to emerge in the Bisotun inscription in the context of the insurgence of Fravartiš. Rebellions necessarily rise within given administrative conditions. These present the political framework within which the leaders of uprisings can establish themselves. Within the core province Media the suppression of Fravartiš was effected in two steps. The description in §§ 25 and 31–32 of the Bisotun text is closely entwined with reports about fighting against rebels in Armenia (DB §§ 26–30) – an initiator is not mentioned here – and Asagarta (DB § 33), where a certain Ciçantaxma is named as chief. This man, like Fravartiš, claimed to be related to the Median king Uvaxštra / Cyaxares. All of these military activities are, after being successfully brought to an end, summed up with the words: “This (is) what has been done by me in Media” (DB § 34). The comprehensive version of Media that is plainly visible here also included Parthia (and Hyrcania) (Jacobs 1994: pp. 176–177; Rollinger 2005: pp. 21–22; cf. Waters 2010: pp. 67–68).

Media as Part of the Imperial Economy and Inter-Provincial Communication

Beyond the abovementioned instances Media is, in Achaemenid times, only incidentally highlighted by the sources. From the Babylonian archive of the so-called Egibi family we get the information that already in 537 BCE, i.e. immediately after the incorporation of Babylonia into the Achaemenid Empire, a representative of that business house was active in Ecbatana – which is, by the way, the first indisputable reference to the name of the city (Strassmaier 1890: *Cyr.* 60; but cf. Medvedskaya 2002). Subsequently several documents testify to the activity of members of the Egibi family in Ecbatana and at other places which are possibly to be located in Media (Zadok 1976: pp. 71–73; Dandamayev 1986).

In Aristophanes’ *Wasps* (ll. 1131–47) we hear about a robe in Athenian ownership, called *kaunakes*; this was reportedly made at Ecbatana and may provide a hint that textile-production was of economic importance.³ Beyond that we can only surmise that in Achaemenid, as in Assyrian times (Radner 2003: pp. 42–43 and 61; Gopnik 2011: pp. 287–290, 301–302), horse-breeding was an important economic factor and that the animals were part of the tax payments imposed upon the province (see Chapter 16 Media). The participation of Medes in working the gold and in decorating the castle wall, as documented in the so-called Foundation Charter of Susa (DSf §13), may also have been services generated by tax obligations.

So far Media is named 24 times on tablets of the Persepolis Fortification Archive, normally as the starting point or destination of travelers. Two other documents (PF 0732 and NN 2502) provide information about commodities

which were brought to Ecbatana to be consumed there “before Irtašduna,” the wife of Darius I. In this context W. Henkelman has drawn attention to the availability of corresponding information about Susa, a parallel which suggests that Ecbatana functioned as an administrative center in much the same way as Susa is known to have done (Henkelman 2010: p. 714 n. 174 and personal communications). In a similar way a Babylonian document from the Michigan Collection which mentions an administrative order issued by a *bēl tēmi* holding office in Media seems to illustrate the fact that Media was well embedded into the inter-provincial communications of the empire (Stolper 1989: p. 302).

NOTES

- 1 A magus (Old-Persian *maguš*) seems to be a member of a class of priests (cf. de Jong 1997).
- 2 Possibly Atropatene did not get its name from that satrap, but inversely the satrap got the title Atropates pursuant to the name of the province (Nagel 1982: p. 35 n.10).
- 3 But as Miller (1997: pp. 154–155) points out, “Ecbatana” may stand here for “Persia” in general.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author is very grateful to Christopher Tuplin for his assistance with the English version of this chapter.

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CHAPTER 36

Babylon

Robert Rollinger

Babylonia and Babylon are at the crossroads of multiple traditions that focus on and imagine the history of the Ancient Near East in the first millennium BCE. In a more general and substantial way, these traditions considerably influenced western thoughts, past and present, on the Near East, its culture, and cities, as well as “oriental” imperial power and politics. Before modern archeologists started to excavate the residences of the Ancient Near Eastern empires in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and before philologists began to decipher and read cuneiform tablets, it was classical sources and biblical texts that shaped the imagination of Ancient Near Eastern empires, their rulers, their cities, and their culture. In this context, Babylon loomed large, attracting an increasingly multilayered set of imagined conceptions and accruing thoughts that developed a life of their own. Herodotus’ *Histories*, Ctesias’ *Persica*, the Alexander historians, the church fathers, universal histories, and Christian chronicles were powerful and influential cornerstones of this tradition that was retold and reshaped again and again in antiquity and transmitted through the Middle Ages to later centuries (Rollinger 2008).

The stories told and the images called up by this tradition shared some common strands that became markers of how Ancient Near Eastern history had to be perceived. Babylon and the Near East were “old”; it was the region where the first empires flourished and where for the first time mighty kings established their rule. This framework was filled with a combination of often conflicting notions. On the one hand, there was admiration for overwhelming imperial power and the manifold testimonies of human achievement as they

A Companion to the Achaemenid Persian Empire, Volume I, First Edition.

Edited by Bruno Jacobs and Robert Rollinger.

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became evident in the gigantic building programs and the enormous size of the cities. On the other hand, however, admiration was tempered by contempt and disdain. Oriental rule was associated with tyranny, the kings described as ruthless despots, and their achievements interpreted as examples of unlimited megalomania. Moreover, these empires were transient, they succumbed to the vicissitudes of time. Their cities lay in ruins and their rulers were thrown from their thrones.

This last point was probably the most powerful image and message tradition conveyed. By means of the theme of *translatio imperii* (the transfer of empires), also inaugurated by Greek historiography (Wiesehöfer 2003), an idea was established that conceptualized world history as a never-ending chain of successive empires that began in the Middle East and continued through present times. Since this conception was adopted further by the masters of Christian universal history, it experienced an astonishing longevity, until it became obsolete in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when the prerogative of interpreting history passed from theologians to professional historians.

All this had considerable consequences. It is true that classical tradition and its successors used to characterize the kings of Babylon, Assyria, and Persia as the “other,” especially as opposed to a blissfully romanticized West, but, so far, this “other” was still part of one’s own tradition. Ancient Near Eastern kings were regarded as despots, indeed, but they were vivid examples of the danger that western kings and emperors could succumb to the same negative behaviors. With the establishment of history as an academic discipline, this kind of conscious connectivity came to an end. It was replaced by another attitude that claimed to have overcome this outdated tradition, although it vigorously focused on world history through an even more romanticized western lens. Classical and biblical sources were regarded as representing myths, amusing tales, and entertaining stories, but not “historical truth.” The latter had to be explored and reconstructed by using entirely new sources, i.e. archeological excavations and the ever-growing mass of cuneiform texts unearthed in the Middle East.

However, the self-confident idea of having overcome the rich set of conceptions and ideas transmitted so successfully and eagerly through the centuries was a fallacy. What changed was an overt and direct reference to this tradition, but it vigorously survived as an unconscious yet still vivid point of reference and interpretation. This becomes evident with the German excavations in Babylon and the scientific interpretations published in the succeeding decades concerning Babylon and Ancient Near Eastern history. As we will see, the established narrative of Persia and the Persian kings plays a crucial role in this context.

The most extensive and influential description of the city of Babylon originates from Herodotus’ *Histories* (published in the last third of the fifth

century BCE). In the first book, the historian gives a detailed overview of the city, which he characterizes as a true megalopolis (*Histories* 1.178–187). According to Herodotus, Babylon represents a square of four times 120 stades, i.e. a circumference of 88–96 km. The city walls are 50 royal cubits (about 27 m) wide and 200 cubits (about 110 m) high, on top of which they allowed for the passage of one quadriga. The river Euphrates is said to have divided the city exactly in two parts. Precisely in the center of each part are localized the two main buildings, the palace and the sanctuary of Bel (for details, see Rollinger 1993). The temple precinct is also square, with a multileveled tower at its center, the top of which can be reached by a spiral staircase winding around the outside of the building. A similarly fanciful description is offered by Ctesias and some other authors (see Jacobs 2011).

When the German archeologists started their excavations it was this imagined city of miracles they wanted to unearth, a city that had already become iconical over more than 2000 years of tradition. Although the city they found and excavated differed greatly from what the *Histories* told, interestingly enough, Herodotus' report was not just taken as a fictitious and fanciful idea of a super-city written by an outsider but as yielding some sort of fact just needed to be interpreted in the right way. Thus Herodotus' description was still regarded much more to represent true history rather than imaginative literature, and this was still valid until very recent times (see, for example, Asheri et al. 2007; contra Rollinger 2014). Of course, the fundamental problem remained that Herodotus' description did not match what the excavations had unearthed. This was explained not systematically but by offering four different modes of explanation that were thought to be complementary to each other. All four modes of explanation took it for granted that Herodotus had visited Babylon in person and that his information is based on his reporting as an eyewitness (Rollinger 1998). These explanations are:

- a) Herodotus was a credulous and credible and trustworthy reporter, but he was consciously misinformed by his “oriental” dragomans. Unfortunately he believed his informants more than what he actually saw.
- b) Herodotus' report is flawed by some faulty memory and confusions that occurred when he returned to Greece and wrote his *Histories*. There was also the difficulty of distinguishing between what he saw, what he read in contemporary and earlier Greek literature, and what he was told.
- c) Herodotus faced considerable difficulties in his exchanges with local informants because of a strong language barrier. This triggered misunderstandings and misconceptions that have to be taken into consideration.
- d) The fourth explanation is most crucial, since it is directly related to the Persian Empire and to Babylon as a city under Persian rule: What the German excavations unearthed is the city of Babylon during its alleged

heyday, i.e. during Neo-Babylonian times, when kings such as Nebuchadnezzar decorated the Babylonian capital with splendid buildings. What Herodotus describes is, partly, fantasy, indeed, but partly it reflects a totally changed and different city. This change is due to Babylonian rebellions that took place during the reigns of Darius I and Xerxes I. The Persian kings, especially Xerxes, are thought to have severely damaged the city with its walls and sanctuaries. After this supposed rupture, Babylon was in decay. What Herodotus saw was a city partially in ruins. He mixed up what he personally encountered and what he was told of Babylon's past. The result is his famous description in the first book of the *Histories*.

This traditional picture, developed by modern scholarship, was further underpinned by three general assumptions and one piece of evidence.

With Persian occupation, Babylonian history in its traditional form came to an end. The kings were foreign kings, who no longer respected the city in the way it was respected in the preceding millennia. Consequently, they reduced their engagement in building activities and public assistance. This is supposed to have been especially true of the renovation of the city walls and the royal engagement for the sanctuaries, which both allegedly came to an end. In particular, it was the famous Tower of Babel that supposedly was in a process of ongoing decay after Xerxes I suppressed two Babylonian revolts and allegedly destroyed the main sanctuary (cf., for example, George 2005/2006, 2010).

Again, classical sources were adduced as chief witnesses for this view. On the one side, the Alexander historians reported that Alexander, when entering the city, found the Tower of Babel in ruins due to preceding Persian demolition. On the other side, it was once more Herodotus who was quoted as principal witness. Wasn't it he who told that Xerxes robbed a statue from the Bel temple in Babylon (1.183), and reported that Darius besieged the city and tore down the walls after his victory (3.151–9)?

There was also the general picture, conveyed by classical sources, of Xerxes as a tyrant and despot, an "Asian king" par excellence, who was imbued with hubris and disrespect toward other cultures and customs. What he supposedly did in Athens, where he destroyed the main sanctuary on the Acropolis (an event that shaped not only Greek but also western historical consciousness), could easily be transferred to Babylon and be interpreted as an analogous action (Wiesehöfer 2017).

Finally, there appeared to be hard evidence for all these assumptions. Since it originated from cuneiform documents and was not manipulated through the lens of classical sources, it was believed to convey the most important argument. Cuneiform tablets clearly document four uprisings against Persian rule, two against Darius and two against Xerxes. The general outline of the

two rebellions against Darius are rather well documented by Darius' Bisitun inscription that refers to a certain Nidintu-Bēl (DB §16–20) and a certain Arakha (DB §49–50). Both pretenders claimed to be Nebuchadnezzar, son of Nabonidus, and both were defeated, Nidintu-Bēl by Darius himself, Arakha by Darius' general Intaphernes. However, although Darius boasts to have punished the two usurpers severely (Nidintu-Bēl was killed, Arakha impaled), he does not mention anything about destructions within the city of Babylon, neither during the combat operations nor afterward, as a kind of punishment. Both kings are also attested in the dating formulas of cuneiform tablets originating from Babylon and some other cities of Babylonia. There they just appear as "Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon (and the lands)." It has become common to designate one as Nebuchadnezzar III and the other as Nebuchadnezzar IV, both reigning only for some months in 522/1 BCE (for details see Lorenz 2008; Bloch 2015).

The two uprisings against Xerxes are more complicated. They are only attested by dating formulas, where first a Bēl-šimānī and second a Šamaš-erība claim to be "king of Babylon and the lands," i.e. king of the Achaemenid Empire as a whole. Until recently, the exact dating of the two usurpers was unclear but they can now be placed firmly in the second year of Xerxes, i.e. 484 BCE (Waerzeggers 2003/2004; Oelsner 2007).

Against this backdrop, important questions arise that are directly connected with the city of Babylon under Persian rule. Was there a major change concerning the defense structures of the city? Were the city walls torn down? Did the main sanctuaries, the Marduk temple Esagil and the Tower of Babylon Etemenanki, survive Persian rule? Was there still Babylonian cult activity in its traditional framework? Were there major destructions within the city? Did Babylonian history come to an end with Persian rule? Was Persian rule a major rupture for Babylonia, and which role did Xerxes play in this context? It may not be a surprise that scholarship is divided in replying to these questions, and that there is no consensus on how to evaluate and assess the different data and to define what Persian rule meant for Babylon and Babylonia. However, some points have become clear in the past two decades.

Herodotus does not report Xerxes' abduction of the Bēl statue in the main sanctuary of Babylon – he calls Bēl's statue *agalma* – but of another, probably votive, statue, which he calls *andrias* (pace Hackl 2016: p. 140; cf. Kuhrt 2014).

The Alexander historians are not reliable sources in contrasting Alexander's alleged policy toward Babylon with Persian rule. Although some of these sources may sound authentic and contemporary, their attitude reflects propaganda much more than reality. Alexander and his entourage had a huge interest in slandering the Persians for their alleged intolerance and tyranny and in presenting Alexander as a true Babylonian king (Henkelman et al. 2011).

There is no archeological evidence for any destruction in Babylon during Persian times, affecting either the walls or any sanctuary. This is also true for the Tower of Babylon Etemenanki: a destruction of its main staircase is highly debated, and even if accepted, it cannot be dated in Persian times (Henkelman et al. 2011; cf. also Miglus 1996). To the contrary, there is archeological evidence for continuity concerning sanctuaries and city walls. What the German archeologists excavated may also represent the Persian as well as the Hellenistic city of Babylon (Heinsch et al. 2011; Kuntner et al. 2011; Kuntner and Heinsch 2013; Messerschmidt 2015).

The traditional cult in Babylon's main sanctuary Esagil continues until deep into Hellenistic times (for details, see below). Concerning Etemenanki, this cannot be definitely proven, but there is enough evidence now to consider it probable. The ziggurat appears in a late Babylonian cultic calendar (BRM IV 25/SBH VII 260f; cf. George 2005/2006 [2008]: p. 77), and in the so-called Esagil tablet. The latter is a famous tablet originating from Seleucid Uruk that describes the tower's dimensions and outline (George 1992: pp. 10–19 No. 13; Oelsner 2002b: pp. 19–20 n. 59, 1999/2000: p. 375). One may minimize this testimony and take the tablet's content as “one of academic training rather than practical architecture” (George 2005/2006 [2008]: 78; see also below), but there is another tablet (BM 119282) that makes a completely functional Etemenanki in Persian times very probable (see Pongratz-Leisten 1994: pp. 218–220, No. 6, and the improved readings offered by George 1997c and Lambert 1997 [1999]: pp. 74–78). Paleographically the text dates “in the period of the Late Babylonian empire or the Persian rule over Babylon” (Lambert 1997 [1999]: p. 74). It attests several “seats” (*šubtu*) of Bēl, and one of them is defined as seat of Bēl in Etemenanki (line 15: *šū-bat^a bēl šá é-te-me-[en-an-ki ...]*). It is difficult not to understand this important testimony as referring to Marduk's presence in the sanctuary, be it as anthropomorphic statue or as a divine symbol erected on the tower. Obviously, this implies a ziggurat that is still in function during Persian times, and, by the way, disproves Herodotus' assertion (1.181.5) that the sanctuary (*neos megas*) on the tower did not host any cult image (*agalma*). Finally, a historical-literary text from the Catholic University of America (Washington D.C.), the copy of which dates between the end of the fourth century and the beginning of the second century BCE, i.e. either in late Persian or in Hellenistic times (CUA 90), may also have some relevance. The text seems to focus on Nabopolassar, the famous founder of the Chaldean dynasty, who defeated the Assyrians at the end of the seventh century BCE and freed Babylon from foreign rule. The Babylonian king is celebrated as a hero, in stark contrast to his predecessors. He is hailed for having re-erected the main sanctuaries and the city walls after they have been destroyed. In this context not only Esagil but also Etemenanki and the city walls that still touch the heaven are mentioned (Da Riva 2017).

Since Nabopolassar is praised as a role model for any contemporary king, the message of the text works only if the sanctuaries mentioned as well as the city walls were still standing and in good shape. Every king, present as well as future, was thus exhorted to act as Nabopolassar and take care of the city as well as of its sanctuaries.

However, there are also significant changes during Achaemenid times that cannot be ignored. There is a cluster of 24 well-known private archives, all of them originating from north Babylonian cities such as Sippar, Babylon, Borsippa, Dilbat, and Kiš, that come to an end with the years Darius 35 (4), Darius 36 (1), Xerxes 01 (09), and finally Xerxes 02 (10) (Waerzeggers 2003/2004: pp. 156–157; Oelsner 2007: p. 292). Although “the end of archives” is not total – there is no break at all in south Babylonian cities such as Uruk and Ur, and there are archives from north Babylonian cities like Borsippa, Babylon, Kiš, und Kutha that are well attested after Xerxes 02,¹ partly even through the reigns of Artaxerxes I and Darius II – it has been argued convincingly that the break with Xerxes 02 has to be connected with the two rebellions of Bēl-šimānni and Šamaš-erība. Since the owners of these archives represent the urban elites that, by virtue of their privileged and hereditary participation in the cult as prebendaries, were deeply involved in the administration of the Babylonian temples, a major social and economic change becomes visible that affected north Babylonian cities at the beginning of Xerxes’ reign. This is also evident in the different social profile exhibited by the owners of those archives that remained unaffected by the break of Xerxes 02. They were much more dependent on the Persians for their livelihood and acted as caretakers of Persian estates. This clearly shows that Xerxes did not just crush the rebellions but grasped the opportunity for taking action in order to deprive traditional north Babylonian elites of their power base (Jursa 2013).

The changes inaugurated by Xerxes appear to have affected north Babylonian families even outside north Babylonia proper. Thus north Babylonian families that held important administrative functions in south Babylonian temples, like in the Eanna of Uruk, disappear between the end of Darius’ reign and the beginning of the reign of Artaxerxes (I ?) (Kessler 2004: pp. 240–247). This phenomenon seems to be somehow related to a larger development concerning the cultic activities in Uruk during Persian times, visible in the growing dominance of the cult of Anu and his Reš sanctuary and the diminishing relevance of formerly much more important cults around Ištar and Nanā in Eanna (Kose 1998: pp. 12–16; Kessler 2004: pp. 250–253). This transition may have been supported by a long-standing antagonism between Uruk and Babylon reaching back as far as Assyrian times (Frahm 2002: pp. 96–97).

What we see are important changes, indeed, but they are by no way overarching. Again, there is no indication of a decline of Babylonia or a decay of Babylon, its city walls, and sanctuaries during Persian times (Joannès 2002: p. 144; Kuhrt

2002: pp. 488–490, 2010; Kessler 2004: p. 253, 2005: p. 271). There was no change in the course of the river Euphrates (Rollinger 1998), and there was no change in royal titles after Xerxes 02. The Achaemenid kings were still “kings of Babylon and the lands” (Rollinger 1999). What Xerxes did was to intervene in the household organization of the temple. This was nothing completely new but a royal prerogative that was practiced as well by many of his predecessors (Kessler 2004: p. 251, 2005: pp. 271, 284; cf. also Jursa 2007: p. 77 with n. 7). Thus the changes enacted at the beginning of Xerxes’ reign are harsh indeed, but rather administrative than cultic-religious (Joannès 2002: p. 144; Hackl 2018).

Again, this becomes fully comprehensible only if one takes into account a larger context. Since Darius’ reign, economic and tax pressure in Babylonia had increased, combined with a growing trend toward monetization (Jursa 2007: pp. 86–89; Hackl 2016). This was due, on the one side, to the long and intensive wars at the beginning of Darius’ reign, on the other, to the large building programs that the Persian king had to finance. The larger part of these building programs took place outside Babylonia, in the new centers of Persian power such as Persepolis, Susa, and Ekbatana. Whereas during the Neo-Babylonian Empire Babylon and Babylonia, to a considerable degree, benefited economically from the revenues of a large empire, such revenues now flowed out of the country. This process started already with Cyrus but increased with Darius. As we know from the Achaemenid royal inscriptions, Xerxes was eager to follow in the footsteps of his father, not least in continuing the large building programs. The upheavals in the violent transition from Teispid (Cyrus and Cambyses) to Achaemenid (Darius I and his successors) rule especially affected Babylonia. These uprisings may already have been related to increasing economic pressure. For the two rebellions against Xerxes, this connection is highly probable.

Given this background, it is no surprise that Xerxes was eager to eliminate that Babylonian class that was so resistant toward Achaemenid rule and its new administrative and economic policies. It was also this class that blocked direct access to the financial and economic control of the huge temple economies and their revenues. It is true that, in general, such intervention could affect cultic practices as well, as we have seen in Uruk. There, however, the Persians did not stop traditional cultic practices but fostered a certain cult at the expense of another. This demonstrates that the Persians had considerable interest in the continued existence of the local cults and the temple economies related to them, for they were a major source of income. They were just seeking a much more efficient and direct control of these incomes, which, as we have seen for Xerxes’ reign, required the elimination of a whole class of Babylonian elite families that lost their privileges. Without any doubt this was a major change. It showed that Babylon and Babylonia were no longer the (only) center of the dominant empire.

However, at least as far as we know, this change did not affect Babylon’s infrastructure. The Persian kings were still eager to present themselves as Babylonian

kings. Although we do not know whether the Achaemenid kings participated in the celebration of the Babylonian New Year festival, Babylon's major temples still existed in late Hellenistic times. Through a Babylonian lens, the city of Babylon remained the cosmic center of the world, as it had been since the second millennium. The Achaemenids did not really break with this conception (Oelsner 2002a,b; cf. also Wieschöfer 1999). Moreover, Babylon's significance as a center of learning and tradition is well attested through Seleucid and Parthian times (Clancier 2009, 2011; Messerschmidt 2015; Ossendrijver 2018). This is attested by temple ritual texts (Linszen 2004), chronicles (van der Spek 2003: p. 290 n. 1), topographical texts, and cultic compendia (George 1997a,c), and it is exemplified especially by the series Tintir that describes Babylon's unique status in an encyclopedic way (cf. George 1997b: pp. 137–145 with a reference to BM 87224, copied in Parthian times). This also applies to those ritual texts that pertain to the annual New Year festival (Pongratz-Leisten 1994; Lambert 1997 [1999]). Of course, one may argue that these texts are just academic witnesses of a self-referential class of scribes who lived in the past and indulged in tradition (Kessler 2006: p. 278; George 2005/2006 [2008]: pp. 77–78, 89). But this *caveat* is based upon the premise that tradition in Hellenistic times lacked any background in reality (cf. Oelsner 2002b: p. 30 n. 110). This is not really convincing, especially when we take into consideration those testimonies that attest cultic activities through Parthian times. Thus, Esangila is well testified in late Achaemenid times (VS 3.187 = NRVU 473), when we still face a “scribe of Esangila” (dated Artaxerxes [I, II or III?] 13): Oelsner 1999/2000: p. 377 n. 39. Astronomical Diary –366 mentions the temple (Berkthold 2005: p. 116), and further evidence can be adduced until the first century BCE (George 1997b: p. 136 with n. 34; Oelsner 1999/2000: p. 376, 2002b: pp. 11–17, 19 with n. 58–9; Hauser 1999: p. 225–226).

It seems that we also have to reckon with fully intact city walls all through Parthian times. Persians, Seleucids, and Parthians were actively engaged in maintaining these walls that are attested at least until 91 BCE (George 1997b: p. 136 with n. 35). Thus there is no evidence at all for their alleged “ferocious finality” in Xerxes' reign (George 1992: p. 349). Even in Arsacid times the city might still have had about 100–130 ha and 20 000–30 000 inhabitants (Hauser 1999: p. 228).

Finally, let us return to the undeniable changes that took place around Xerxes 02. The much debated “end of archives”² does not refer to a hasty action but, on the contrary, to a conscious act of record-keeping. The texts were sorted out carefully, which, for sure, took some time (Waerzeggers 2003/2004: p. 162a). As Michael Jursa puts it, “this sifting of the records occurred when the royal administration demanded administrative changes after the suppression of the revolt: in the light of the evidence of the private archives from Babylon, Borsippa and Uruk, it seems highly likely that the old class of administrators was removed from office and new men were brought in, who began by drawing up accounts

and getting rid of the cumbersome old archive. Had the temple been sacked and the cult entirely disrupted, no one would have gone to so much trouble” (Jursa 2007: p. 91; see also Jursa 2004: p. 193).

What does all this evidence mean for asserting Persian rule in Babylonia in general and Xerxes’ reign in particular? Based on the evidence we just discussed, Xerxes appears much less as a destroyer of temples and sanctuaries (cf. Funke 2007; Wiesehöfer 2017) than as a radical administrative reformer (Hackl 2018). The splitting of the huge province of “Babylonia and Transeuphratene” into two smaller units, Babylonia versus Transeuphratene, also took place during his reign (Klinkott 2019). Although administrative reforms continued also after Xerxes’ reign – thus the office of a “city governor” (*šākin-ṭēmi*) was abolished only later (pace Hackl 2016: p. 141; cf. Waerzeggers 2003/2004: p. 173, Addendum) – Xerxes played a crucial role in this process of transformation (Hackl 2018). This picture perfectly fits into what recent research has worked out on the second Achaemenid king (Wiesehöfer 2007 is basic). As son and successor of a usurper king he can be regarded as the actual founder of the new Achaemenid dynasty. He not only took over the newly established empire from his father but had to secure it for his family and successors. This implied putting the empire and its administrative structure on a firm basis that guaranteed its and the dynasty’s existence in the future. One of these measures greatly affected the old elite families of northern Babylonia that were eliminated. That such a harsh step might have resulted in social upheaval and a bad reputation for an active and vigorous king is no surprise (for scholarly innovations by priests associated with the Esangila temple during Xerxes’ reign see Ossendrijver 2018). Such a biased view can be clearly recognized in our sources. However, it is the task of critical historians to look behind the curtain and to disclose the intentions and agendas of these very sources. Certainly, for Babylonia, Achaemenid-Persian rule brought change, but a change that is much more adequately described as transition than as rupture. The country began to lose its central and unique position within the empire. Babylonia more and more resembled a “province,” one of the most important ones, but a “province.” The last point also has major consequences for our modern assessment of Babylonian documentation for Persian history and beyond. The sources, still rich, from various Babylonian cities steadily become sources more and more relevant for Babylonia proper than for the empire as a whole.

NOTES

- 1 For the reign of Xerxes there are now 240 cuneiform tablets available. About 150 date before Xerxes 02, about 90 date after Xerxes 02, the rest cannot be assigned to a specific year (Oelsner 2007: p. 293).
- 2 “End of archives” means that most of the private archives of Babylon appear to have stopped cuneiform documentation around Xerxes 02.

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FURTHER READING

Excellent overviews on the state of research for Babylon in Persian and Hellenistic times can be found in Messerschmidt (2015) and Heller (2010). The economic developments in Babylonia are analysed in detail by Jursa (2014). For an assessment of Herodotus as a source for the history of Babylon see Rollinger (2014). The influential receptive histories of Babylon are masterfully exemplified by Scheil (2016). The ideologically-charged views on “Oriental” cities are unfolded and deciphered by Liverani (2016). The vivid debates around Babylon in Persian times are summarized by Henkelman et al. (2011), Waerzeggers and Seire (2018), and Klinkott (2019).

CHAPTER 37

The Persian Gulf

Daniel T. Potts

Introduction

Despite the proximity of the Persian Gulf to the many successive states that have occupied some or all of the Iranian mainland, the geo-political significance of this shallow, epicontinental sea cannot be assumed in all periods. Throughout the third and most of the second millennium BCE, for example, the various incarnations of the Elamite kingdom showed little interest in the Persian Gulf. Nevertheless, maritime connections between Susa and Dilmun (Bahrain) are attested in the Old Babylonian period, and the Kassites and Middle Elamite rulers, perhaps due to ties fostered by inter-marriage between their royal houses, may have had their own spheres of influence in the region, the Kassites in the north (including in Bahrain) and the Elamites in the south (including in Oman). During the first millennium CE the Persian Gulf functioned as an easily navigable trade route, but the evidence of either Parthian or Sasanian political and military hegemony is sporadic at best, and evidence from the early Islamic era is meager to say the least. In the mid-tenth century the Buyids briefly extended their rule to Oman and a century later the Seljuqs followed suit. The Salghurid Atabegs of Fars took over Kish in the early thirteenth century, quickly extending their conquests to Basra, Bahrain, al-Qatif (eastern Saudi Arabia), and Qalhat (Oman), and when Bahrain was sacked by Qutbu'd Din in 1331/2 all of these emporia became nodes in the commercial empire of the kingdom of Hormuz, the wealth of which was immortalized

A Companion to the Achaemenid Persian Empire, Volume I, First Edition.

Edited by Bruno Jacobs and Robert Rollinger.

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in Milton's *Paradise Lost* (PL 2.2). But "Iranian" domination of the Persian Gulf never again equaled what the kingdoms of Kish and Hormuz had achieved and during the Safavid period, when Iran was finally unified politically, the Persian Gulf – more specifically Gombroon (later renamed Bandar Abbas), Hormuz, Qeshm, Larak, Julfar, and Bahrain – became of interest only once foreign powers (Portugal, the European trading companies, and Oman) appeared on the scene. Portugal was the principal naval power in the Persian Gulf during the sixteenth century, the Dutch (and less so the English) during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, and the English during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Safavids and Qajars, for example, were far more concerned with their terrestrial neighbors – the Ottomans in the west; the Russians in the Caucasus; the Uzbeks in the northeast; and the Mughals and Afghans in the east – than they were with the Persian Gulf (Floor 1987: pp. 31–32). Thus, we should be wary of assuming that, just because it bounded southern Babylonia, Susiana, and Persis, the Persian Gulf was of major concern to the Achaemenids.

The Persian Gulf and Its Iranian Islands

In one of his trilingual (Old Persian, Elamite, and Akkadian) inscriptions at Suez (DZc, §3.7–12), Darius commemorated the opening of "this canal from a river by name Nile which flows in Egypt, to the sea which goes from Persia," and says that "ships went from Egypt through this canal to Persia" (Kent 1953: p. 147; Lecoq 1997: p. 248). In reality the "sea which goes from Persia" was of course the Red Sea, but in describing it in this way, Darius foreshadowed the Greek convention of using the hydronym *Erythraean Sea* to denote the combined waters of the Persian Gulf, the western Indian Ocean, and the Red Sea, all of which was conceived of as an uninterrupted body of water. Moreover, Darius' statement implies that the Persian Gulf itself was under Persian control, or at least not hostile, since ships traveling from Achaemenid Egypt to Babylonia or Susiana sailed through it.

Indeed, given what we know about the populations in mainland eastern Arabia and Bahrain at that time, it would be difficult to imagine the existence of any sort of anti-Persian resistance in this politically disunited area dominated by communities engaged in date-palm horticulture, herding, fishing, pearling, and maritime trade. In the immediately pre-Persian period there may have been a Babylonian governor in Dilmun (i.e. Bahrain, see below), and before that several kings of Dilmun and a king of Izkie in Oman had sworn fealty to the Assyrians (Kessler 1983; Potts 1985b), but no state or dynasty, that we know of, existed in the region when the Achaemenid Empire was established.

It was perhaps because of the very absence of strong political authority that the area was not constituted as a satrapy on its own but was instead absorbed by Darius into the fourteenth satrapy. This, according to Herodotus, comprised an amalgam of “Sagartians, Sarangians, Thamanaeans, Utians, Mycians, and the inhabitants of the islands in the Erythraean Sea...who together contributed 600 talents” (*Hist.* 3.93). While the first four groups were all located in continental (greater) Iran, the Mycians (OP Mačiya) lived in Oman (OP Makā). Despite the often repeated view that the region known to the Achaemenids as Makā (cf. Akk. *Makkan*, El. *Makkaš*) was located in the Makran area of southeastern Iran and southwestern Pakistan (e.g. Eilers 1983), the evidence for locating it in Oman is compelling. In brief, the Achaemenid trilingual royal inscriptions give its Akkadian equivalent as Qadē/ū, while the no longer extant Ištar Slab inscription from Nineveh records Assurbanipal’s receipt of tribute from Padē, king of Qadē, whose capital was at Is/zkie. This is, in all likelihood, identical with Izki in the interior of Oman, considered in local oral tradition to be the oldest town in Oman (Potts 1985a,b, 2010: p. 529). In addition, the Persepolis fortification tablets refer to “Arabs/Arabians” (El. *har-ba-a-be*; cf. OP *arabāya*) from Makkaš (PFa 17, PFa 29, PF 2050) who received rations for travel between Susa and Makkaš (de Blois 1989).

The Mycians, as Herodotus called them, appear as the Mačiya in five Old Persian texts from Naqš-e Rostam, Susa, and Persepolis dating to the reigns of Darius, Xerxes, and Artaxerxes III (DNa 30; DNe 29; DSe 23–24; XPh 25; A³Pa 30; Vallat 1993: p. 164; Lecoq 1997: pp. 271–272 [attrib. Artaxerxes II but note Schmitt 2009: p. 37 who convincingly attributes this inscription to Artaxerxes III on linguistic grounds]). They are depicted on Darius I’s Šallufa stele, on his Egyptian statue from Susa, and on the tomb reliefs of Darius I at Naqš-e Rostam and Artaxerxes III at Persepolis (Schmitt 2009: p. 41) where they are shown naked from the waist up, wearing a belted kilt or loincloth. Their distinctive short sword, slung from a strap over the left shoulder, is reminiscent of examples found in many Iron Age graves throughout the Oman peninsula (Potts 1998: pp. 192–195, Figs. 5–10).

Finally, two of the Persepolis Fortification tablets (PF 679–680) confirm the presence of a satrap in Makkaš. In 505/4 BCE, the satrap Irdumašda, who clearly bore a Persian name (**Ṛtāmazdā*; Tavernier 2007: pp. 297–298), received a ration of wine at Tamukkan/Taocê (PF 679; on their identity see Tolini 2008), inland from modern Bushehr, while in the second text (PF 680), the date of which is damaged, the satrap Zamašba (**Jāmāspa*; Tavernier 2007: p. 220), who also received wine, is said to have gone to the king (Hallock 1969: p. 23).

As for the islands alluded to by Herodotus, none of these is mentioned by name, nor do they appear in either the Achaemenid royal inscriptions or the

Persepolis fortification texts. We learn the names of those closest to the Iranian coast, however, in Arrian's account of Nearchus' voyage from the mouth of the Indus to Susa, almost immediately after the demise of the Achaemenid empire. If we ignore those islands mentioned by Arrian that were situated off the Makran (Gedrosia) coast in the Arabian Sea and begin with those located in the Straits of Hormuz, the first inhabited island noted was Oaracta (Ὀάρακτα), a "large, inhabited island ... Vines and date-palms grew there and it produced corn; its length was 800 stades" (Arrian, *Ind.* 37.2; var. Δύρακτα, Δῶακτα [Strabo, *Geog.* 16.3.7]; Oracla [Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* 6.28], Δῶρα [Steph. Byz., ed. Meineke 1849: pp. 250–251]; Oracea [Rav. Anon., *Cosmog.* 5.17]). The identification of Oaracta with Jazireh-ye Qeshm, the largest island in the Persian Gulf, was long ago established on the basis of the toponym Broct/Burkhut, which appears as the name of a town on the island or as the island itself, in medieval Arabic and early modern (e.g. Portuguese) sources and is cognate with Oaracta (Potts 2020 with earlier lit.).

After describing several more uninhabited islands, Nearchus reached Cataea (Καταία; cf. Catag(i)a, Rav. Anon., *Cosmog.* 5.17), described by Arrian (*Ind.* 37.10) as "a desert, low-lying island, said to be sacred to Hermes and Aphrodite.... Every year the people round about send sheep and goats consecrated to Hermes and Aphrodite, which could be seen, quite wild from lapse of time and want of handling." This is modern Jazireh-ye Qeys or Kish.

The next inhabited island mentioned by Arrian went unnamed and was referred to only as "another island, inhabited ... according to Nearchus there is pearl-fishing here" (Arrian, *Ind.* 38.3–4). This is almost certainly Jazireh-ye Lavān, an island c. six nautical miles west-southwest of Ras-e Nakhilu, known to the early Islamic geographers as al-Lar and to nineteenth century writers generally as Shaikh Abu Shu'aib (Busheab, Shaikh Suaib), a place with pearl fishing (Potts 2015).

Apart from Kharg where, in late 2007, a rock-cut cuneiform inscription, allegedly in Old Persian, was discovered (Bashash 2007; very possibly a pre-modern forgery), there is little published archeological evidence from any of the Iranian islands. The inhabitants of these islands were, however, mentioned by Herodotus, who noted that, under the command of Mardontes, "tribes ... from the islands in the Erythraean Sea" took part in the parade of Doriscus. That Herodotus meant islands bordering Iran rather than Arabia is suggested by his description of the inhabitants who "closely resembled the Medes in respect of both clothing and weaponry" (*Hist.* 7.80). Whether the Erythraean islanders resembled the Medes because they had been equipped with Median dress and weaponry for the campaign, or because they dressed and armed themselves in this fashion in their native habitat, we do not know (Potts 2020: p. 388). Logically, it is difficult to imagine islanders from the hot, humid Persian Gulf wearing Median dress when they were at home. Much later,

contingents from the “tribes bordering on the Erythraean Sea,” which could also mean mainlanders from the coastal regions, fought alongside Darius III at Issus under the command of Orontobates, Ariobarzanes, and Orxines (Arrian, *Anab.* 3.8.5).

The islands of the Erythraean Sea also served another function. According to Herodotus, this was “where the Persian king settles the people known as the *anaspastoi*,” i.e. dispossessed (*Hist.* 3.93; cf. 7.80). Although less famous than the Mediterranean island of Elba, where Napoleon famously spent 300 days in exile, the island of Ogyris, where the tomb of the legendary king Erythras (after whom the Erythraean Sea was named according to some accounts; see Burstein 1989: pp. 42–45), performed a similar function for Mithropastes, son of Aristes, satrap of Phrygia. According to Strabo, Mithropastes “was banished by Darius III, took up his residence in the island” and joined Nearchus and Orthagoras “when they landed in the Persian Gulf, and sought through them to be restored to his homeland” (Strabo, *Geog.* 16.3.5). Seemingly banished to Ogyris by Darius III as a result of his father Aristes’ suicide following the battle of Granicus in 334 BCE, Mithropastes had already been there for a number of years when Nearchus arrived (Bosworth 1996: p. 66). Strabo also says that Mithropastes was “in company with Mazenes ... ruler (*hyparch*) of an island in the Persian Gulf ... called Oaracta” and “that Mithropastes took refuge, and obtained hospitality, in this island upon his departure from Ogyris” (Strabo, *Geog.* 16.3.7). Thus, that after escaping detention on Ogyris – presumably facilitated by the collapse of Achaemenid authority and the arrival of Nearchus – Mithropastes made his way to Oaracta, i.e. Qeshm. Strangely, although Strabo cites Nearchus and Orthagoras as his sources, Ogyris does not appear in Arrian’s account of Nearchus’ voyage, nor has it been possible to determine the identity of Ogyris with any certainty, though several possibilities (Hormuz, Lārak, and Masirah, off the coast of Oman) have been suggested (Potts 2020 with refs.).

In any case, the reference to Mazenes, styled “*hyparch* of an island in the Persian Gulf” (Περσικὸν κόλπον) by Strabo, is important, since hyparchs were generally in charge of sub-regions under the authority of a satrap. In this case, it is unclear which satrap (of Karmania? Jacobs 1994: p. 206; of Persis? Petit 1990: p. 214) may have had jurisdiction over the region and whether that was synonymous with the “islands in the Erythraean Sea.”

The Achaemenid Presence on the Arabian Islands

There were, of course, other islands of importance in the Persian Gulf with settled populations off the Arabian coast. In the far north, the site of Tell Khazneh on the island of Failaka, in the Bay of Kuwait, has yielded pottery

and figurines tentatively dated to the fifth/fourth centuries BCE (Salles 1986: pp. 127–128). More important, however, was Bahrain (Sum. Dilmun, Akk. Tilmun, Gr. Tylos, Lat. Tylus). Blessed with artesian springs of fresh water, Bahrain historically produced dates in abundance and served as an entrepôt in long-distance trade between Babylonia, the Oman peninsula, and the Indian sub-continent. Although ancient authors were most impressed by its vegetation (e.g. Theophrastus, *Historia Plantarum* 5.4.7–8; *De Causis Plantarum* 2.5.5; Pliny, *Natural History* 12.21.38–23.40), Bahrain was also famous for pearling (Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistai* 3.146; Theophrastus, *De Lapidibus* 36; Philostratus, *Vita Apollonii* 3.57).

That pearls – very probably from the Persian Gulf – were prized in Achaemenid Iran is well-illustrated by a late Achaemenid grave excavated at Susa, dated numismatically to c. 350–332 BCE, that contained 400–500 pearls and gold spacer beads arranged in three strands (de Morgan 1905; Tallon 1992: p. 242). Bahrain's lucrative pearling industry, combined with its ready supply of fresh water, substantial date gardens, and cotton production (referred to by Theophrastus), must have made it of more than passing interest for the Achaemenids. Scholars have disagreed, however, on the question of whether or not the Achaemenids had a permanent political presence there.

An immediately pre-Achaemenid cuneiform text (VS 6.81) from the eleventh year (545/4 BCE) of Nabonidus, last king of the Neo-Babylonian dynasty, mentions an administrative official (^l*bel pīhāti*) in Dilmun. Although this may have simply been a Babylonian agent responsible for trade between Dilmun and Babylonia (Kessler 1983: p. 152), it could also denote a true Babylonian governor. If so, then with the conquest of Babylonia by Cyrus the Great, Dilmun would have become de facto a part of the empire and henceforth may have had an Achaemenid governor (Salles 1998: p. 53; Potts 2007a: p. 71). Although there is no epigraphic evidence from either Babylonia or Bahrain to confirm this, the archeological evidence is suggestive. An imposing palace built of stone at the main site of Qalat al-Bahrain (Højlund and Andersen 1997: Plan 3; Potts 2007a: Fig. 1), parts of which date to the early second millennium BCE, was occupied during the Achaemenid period (periods IVc–d). The typically Achaemenid bowl form, a shape previously unknown on Bahrain, was introduced at this time (Højlund and Andersen 1997: Figs. 658, 674, etc.; Potts 2007a: p. 59 and Fig. 16.B–8, 2010: Fig. 49.4) and manufactured there. This can be deduced by an examination of the extant examples from Bahrain which are clearly made in a local ware and were not imports from Iran or Babylonia.

Of equal if not greater interest, however, is a glass stamp seal, found just above the floor in room B6 of the palace, showing an Achaemenid “court style” contest scene between a royal hero and a winged bull (Højlund and Andersen 1997: Fig. 734; Potts 2007a: Fig. 16, 2010: Fig. 49.2). At Persepolis, impressions of similar seals were found on treasury and fortification tablets

(Garrison and Root 2001: Pls. 274–275, 279f, 280h, 285h). On the other hand, at Nippur, in Babylonia, seals showing generally similar iconography were impressed on private, economic texts by members of the Murašû family (Zettler 1979: pp. 260–263). Thus, despite the royal iconography, the presence of such a seal does not automatically imply the presence of a holder of high political office, e.g. a hyparch. It could also have been used by an affluent merchant. On the other hand, it is also possible that the élite resident of the palatial building at Qalat al-Bahrain was a merchant who may have functioned as a hyparch. Certainly the building is no ordinary house.

The Persian Gulf as a Maritime Highway for the Transmission of Knowledge

Finally, as shown by DZc, the Persian Gulf was clearly used as a maritime channel. During Darius' reign vessels sailed between Egypt and Persia, but the Persian Gulf's role as a conduit of cultural exchange was much broader. Reference has already been made to the presence of cotton on Bahrain in the early Hellenistic period, and archeobotanical evidence of cotton, in the form of seeds, as well as textile fragments tentatively identified as cotton, have been found in the palatial building on Qalat al-Bahrain (Bouchaud et al. 2011: pp. 410–411). The Indian sub-continent, where cotton was an important cultivar (Boivin and Fuller 2009: p. 162), is the likeliest original source of Bahrain's cotton. But ideas as well as commodities and cultivars circulated through the Persian Gulf as well.

It has long been noted that Mesopotamian methods and parameters were absorbed into Indian mathematical astronomy during the Achaemenid period (Pingree 1974). Specifically, works like the *Jyotiṣavedāṅga*, a manual used to determine times for the performance of Vedic sacrifices, owe a great deal to redactions of the Mesopotamian text MUL.APIN from the seventh/sixth centuries BCE, while the Pāli *Dīghanikāya*, of the fourth/third century BCE, incorporates astral omens taken from *Enūma Anu Ellil*, and the later Sanskrit *Gargasamhitā* includes omens from *Enūma Anu Ellil* and *šumma ālu* that “must have entered India during the Achaemenid period” (Pingree 1982: p. 618). Considering the clearly Mesopotamian pedigree of the esoteric knowledge of mathematics, astronomy, and divination that was transferred from Babylonia to India, it is plausible to suggest that this was facilitated by travel through the Persian Gulf. Nothing suggests that the Achaemenids played a direct role in this transmission. What the Achaemenids did do, however, was to unite these two distant regions – Babylonia and parts of India – under one political system, acting as a facilitator in the transfer of knowledge. The creation of a *pax Achaemenidica* established the conditions under which this type of cultural exchange flourished (Potts 2007b: pp. 126–127).

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CHAPTER 38

The Arabian World

David F. Graf and Arnulf Hausleiter

Arabia

In the so-called “Satrapy Lists” of Darius I, the province of “Arabia” or of the “Arabians” (OP *Arabāya*) appears normally between Assyria and Egypt (DB col. 1.15, DNa l. 26f., DSe l. 26, DSm l. 7). This southwestern geographical trajectory suggests “Arabia” should be located between Syria and Egypt, probably in north Sinai, southern Palestine, or northwest Arabia. The exception is Darius’ listing of “Babylonia, Arabia, Assyria and Egypt” (DPe l. 10–12), and that of Xerxes of “Ionians, Maka, Arabia, Gandara, Sind, and Cappadocia” (XPh l. 23–26). In spite of these oddities, under Artaxerxes II or III, there is a return to the normal Darius I sequence of “Babylonia, Assyria, Arabia, Egypt” (A3Pb l. 16–19). The territory of Arabia seems to be within the satrapy of “Beyond the River” or *Ebir Nāhar*, the region west of the Euphrates, a satrapy created sometime after 486 BCE (Stolper 1989: pp. 283–305).

The most recent entry to the “subject peoples” is the Darius statue discovered at Susa in 1972 in which the “subject peoples” are listed in Egyptian hieroglyphs: Arabia appears again between Assyria and Egypt (Roaf 1974: pp. 135–136), but with an additional piece of evidence for location. Of the 24 countries listed, the last four use Egyptian terms: Arabs, Egyptians, Libya, and Nubia (Yoyotte 2013: p. 264). “Arabia” (the XIX satrapy) is designated by the ethnic term “Hakor,” well attested in Egypt for “Arabians” (Posener

1969: pp. 148–150; de Meulenaere 1977: pp. 931–932). The corresponding depiction of the “Arabian” on the Susa statue is more difficult to interpret. He is beardless and bareheaded, with his hair arranged with a bob above his forehead and in back of his head, with his ear uncovered. He wears a tightly wrapped pleated garment from his neck to his feet, with a shawl over his shoulders, its tasseled ends hanging in front. It is similar to the Thracians on the Darius Statue, suggesting a stylistic “convention” (Yoyotte 2013: p. 277 fig. 299). It also differs from the depictions of Arabians elsewhere at Persepolis, such as the Apadana, where the Arabians have goatee beards, or on the Hall of 100 Columns, with full beards. Nevertheless, the Apadana reliefs also depict the Arabians carrying cloth with tasseled corners that mimics their dress (cf. Hdt. 7.69). The problem is that in Egypt most Asiatics are represented with long gowns and shawls (Roaf 1974: p.136). In spite of these stylistic differences, the Darius Statue’s use of the Egyptian term “Hakor” for the Arabians offers a valuable clue to their location and identity.

In contrast, in Herodotus’ description of Darius’ 20 tribute-bearing provinces (3.89–94), Arabia and the Arabs are excluded. With his Greek orientation, the first four provinces are all in Anatolia, and the fifth satrapy is described as extending from the Orontes in north Syria to the borders of Egypt, and includes Phoenicians, Palestinians, Syrians, and Cypriots, but not Arabs, as they were not subject to “tribute” (Hdt. 3.91). As he indicates, along with the Ethiopians and Colchians, the Arabs provided only “gifts,” not “tribute,” an annual “gift” of 1000 talents of frankincense (3.97). Nevertheless, this extraordinary large gift of c. 26 tons must be regarded as part of the Achaemenid imperial taxation, the siphoning off from the substantial commercial profits produced by the Arabian aromatics trade with south Arabia, making the distinction between “gifts” and “tribute” artificial (cf. Briant 2002: pp. 387, 397).

The incorporation of Arabia among the “Subject Peoples” of Darius I (521–486 BCE) suggests it was acquired during Cambyse’s Egyptian campaign of 525 BCE. In his account of Cambyse’s campaign, Herodotus indicates the Arabs were in control of the north Sinai ports between Gaza (Cadytis) and Ienysus. The latter is probably Tell er-Ruqeish, 20 km southwest of Gaza, perhaps the “sealed harbor (*kāru*) of Egypt” that the Assyrian king Sargon II created in 715 BCE (Lemaire 1990: p. 46; Na’aman 2004: pp. 61–63). Beyond Ienysus to Pelusium, he describes the ports as “Syrian,” but this may be an anachronism for the previous Phoenician-dominated eastern Mediterranean coast.

In actuality, Herodotus depicts the Arab penetration to the very borders of Egypt, with the entire Egyptian eastern frontier called “Arabian.” Cambyse’s attempt to cross the north Sinai was so difficult that he was forced to negotiate a safe passing with the local “Arab king,” who controlled the forbidding

“Arab strip” leading into Egypt (Hdt. 3.5–10). At Pelusium, on the eastern edge of the delta, he locates a military post called Daphnae (Tell Defeneh) that faces the “Arabians and Assyrians” (2.30); east of Heliopolis he locates the “mountains of Arabia,” which further east “yield frankincense” (2.8, cf. 124). In the region of Wadi Tumilat near the Suez, he calls the settlement of Patumus an “Arab village” (2.158), probably Tell el-Maskhuta, where Darius I constructed a canal to the Suez Gulf, which Herodotus calls the “Arabian Gulf.” The Wadi Tumilat was the main entry point into Egypt for Arabian trade: excavations at Tell el-Maskhuta have produced Phoenician amphorae, small cubic Arabian limestone altars, and Himyaritic silver coins (Holladay 1997: pp. 435–436). By the Hellenistic period, Tell el-Maskhuta or Pithom (= Egyptian *Tkm*) became known as Heroonpolis and the Wadi Tumilat region constituted the “Arabian” nome (Helck 1977: pp. 398 and 402) because of the influx of Arabians into Egypt through this passageway (Altheim and Stiehl 1975: pp. 360–361).

The Qedarite Kingdom

For the identity of Herodotus’ “Arab king,” the details have to be pieced together from non-official Persian sources. The first clue is the mention in the Hebrew Bible of “Geshem the Arab” as forming part of the opposition to the Judean Nehemiah’s attempt to fortify Jerusalem in c. 445–433 BCE (Neh 2:19; 6:1–2, 6). Further illumination of Geshem is from a handful of epigraphical finds. The first is from Tell el-Maskhuta, where a silver bowl dated to c. 400 BCE inscribed with Aramaic dedicatory to Han-’Ilāt (“the [Arab] goddess”) discovered in a shrine reads: “This is what Qainu son of Geshem, king of Qedar, offered to Han-’Ilāt” (Rabinowitz 1956: pp. 2, 5–7, Pl. VII.a–b: *zy qynw br gšm hmlk qdr lhn’lt*). The date suggests this “Qainu” is the son and successor of the biblical “Geshem the Arab.” The second piece of evidence is an Aramaic text from Lachish in southern Palestine, inscribed on an incense altar of c. 500 BCE belonging to “Iyas son of Mahlay, the king” (*lbnt ‘ys bn mhly hmlk*), suggesting he may be the royal predecessor of “Geshem the Arab.” A third text, a north Arabian Liḥyanite text from al-’Ulā in the Hijaz, is dated to “the days of Gashm son of Shahr and of ‘Abd, governor of Dedan” (*br’ym gšm bn šhr w’bd fḥt ddn*). The expression *br’y* (“in the time of”) implies that the sequence of officials ended with the name of a king, and perhaps the Persian king. If the connection of this “Gashm” with “Geshem the Arab” is accepted (cf. Winnett and Reed 1970: pp. 115–117), it furnishes the dynastic patronym of Šahrū. The later patronym reappears in a recently published stele from Taymā’ that mentions a *Pšgw Šhrw b[r m]lky lḥyn*, i.e. “Pšgw Šahrū son of the King of Liḥyan.” The preceding damaged first line [...*t*] *tym’*

has been restored as “Šahrū, governor (*[ph]t*) of Taymā’,” and this Šahrū is considered the grandson of Geshem the contemporary of Nehemiah, and therefore Šahrū II, who was the brother of the Liḥyanite king. The name Šahrū is derived from the divine name Šahr, an epithet of the moon god. The reappearance of the name in epigraphic and numismatic evidence in Palestine, Transjordan, and north Arabia is considered a product of papponymy, typical of the Qedarite and Liḥyanite dynasties, and it is assumed that the latter was an offshoot of the former kingdom (Cross 1986: pp. 387–391; cf. Eph’al 1982: pp. 204–214). The lack of chronological precision of the texts makes it difficult to know which Šahrū is at stake, and other possibilities exist (see Potts 2010b: p. 44; Fischer-Bossert 2010: pp. 175–176, and Hausleiter below) but are equally theoretical (Potts 2010b: p. 35).

But if this hypothetical reconstruction of the royal lineage of the Qedarite kingdom is correct, the sequence of Qedarite kings for the Persian period can be reconstructed as follows: Mahlay (end of the sixth century BCE), Ilyas (first quarter of the fifth century BCE), Šahrū I (second quarter of the fifth century BCE), Geshem (third quarter of the fifth century BCE), Qainu (last quarter of the fifth century BCE), and Šahrū II (first half of the fourth century BCE): Lemaire 1990: pp. 45–56. More importantly, if the texts are inter-related, the Qedarite kingdom has expanded its territory from Palestine and the Sinai to include the major oases of [Al-‘Ulā] and Taymā’ in north Arabia.

This implies a nominal Persian “takeover” of Taymā’ after the Persian king Cyrus’ defeat of the Neo-Babylonian king Nabonidus in 539 BCE, involving the integration of Babylonian territories in Arabia. Previously, Nabonidus had occupied Taymā’ for a decade (c. 552–542 BCE), taking over the major oases in the Hijaz, killing the king of Taymā’, and defeating the king of Dedan (Gadd 1958: pp. 35–92; Eph’al 1982: pp. 170–191; Beaulieu 1989: pp. 144–185; cf. Livingstone 1989: pp. 97–105). During his tenure at Taymā’, Nabonidus built a palace, fortified and garrisoned the city, and surrounded it with a string of forts (Beaulieu 1989: pp. 171–174). Just south of Taymā’, several Taymā’nite inscriptions are engraved by officials that even mention the Neo-Babylonian king Nabonidus (Hayajneh 2001; Müller and al-Said 2002, and Lemaire 2003: pp. 288–289). At Jabal Ghunaym, 14 km southeast of Taymā’, some Taymā’nite texts mention wars conducted against Dedan, Massā’, and Nabayāt, perhaps connected to Nabonidus’ campaign (Winnett and Reed 1970: pp. 88–107, Nos. 1–44) or the later breakdown of Persian rule (Knauf 1990: p. 214). It is also clear that Nabonidus’ introduction of Aramaic into Taymā’ continued into the Persian period (Degen 1974; Lemaire 1995).

Recent archeological investigations at Al-‘Ulā (ancient Dedan) are also producing new evidence for the Persian period (Al-Said 2010). New Dedanite texts are adding new kings to the dynastic lists and new deities to the pantheon (Al-Said 2011: pp. 196–200), providing new insight into Liḥyanite society at

Dedan (see Farès-Drappeau 2005). The later Lihyanite inscriptions provide for us the names of six kings (*mlk*) of Lihyan and three others of persons of(?) royal lineage without a title, and of(?) six governors (*r'y*), whose reigns are arranged from the late Persian into the Hellenistic eras, c. the mid-fourth to the first century BCE, but the new finds indicate the royal time span must be enlarged to include the early Persian period (Abu al-Hassan 2010), as both Dedan and Lihyan are now mentioned in a south Arabian Sabaeen text dating to c. 600 BCE (Bron and Lemaire 2009). At Taymā', Lihyanite royal dedications indicate their kings had special intimate connections with the settlement in the Persian period (Hausleiter 2010: pp. 233–234 and 258).

The Borders of Arabia

These scattered details make demarcating the borders of “Achaemenid Persia” difficult, if not a “pointless exercise” (Briant 2002: p. 761; cf. Anderson 2010). Although it is commonly assumed that Herodotus’ so-called “Fifth Satrapy” is equivalent to the Persian province of “Across the River” (*Abar Nahara*), this correlation is too simple. Herodotus’ description of the Fifth Satrapy focuses on the coastal regions, probably derived from Hecataeus’ travels, and fails to provide any details of the territorial extent of the Fifth Satrapy, whose frontiers are nebulous at best (3.91). Herodotus’ account of the satrapies also is an “artificial” construction derived from Greek sources, not from official Persian documentation, which includes Arabia among the “subject peoples,” whereas Herodotus excludes Arabians from his “Fifth Satrapy.”

As a result, the size and extent of the Qedarite kingdom is controversial. There are “maximalist” and “minimalist” proposals. Leutze (1935: p. 259 [103]) placed the eastern border of *Abar Nahara* in the middle of the Syro-Arabian desert, and included the Arabs in the satrapy (122 [110]). Most have followed his interpretation, connecting all of the possible epigraphic details of the Qedarite confederation to suggest they controlled the north Sinai, the countryside of southern Palestine, southern Transjordan, and northwest Arabia (Lemaire 1990: pp. 45–56; Knauf 1990: p. 207). More recently, it has been argued the southern borders of *Abar Nahara* were only from Al-'Arish in the west to Transjordan in the east, excluding Arabs from the satrapy and restricting the Qedarites to the Sinai, Transjordan, and north Arabia (Tuell 1991: pp. 54–56). Advocates of this view of a truncated Qedar place Geshem remote from Judah, and interpret his conflict with Nehemiah as a commercial dispute involving the lucrative Arabian incense trade (Eph'al 1982: pp. 211–212; 1988: p. 164; but cf. Eph'al 1998: p. 115, Geshem may have “wielded some influence in Idumaea at the time”). The underlying premise is that there was no cohesive political unification of north Arabia at the time.

New finds provide occasional glimpses into the demography and size of this extensive landscape related to these issues. The presence of Geshem king of the Arabs in southern Palestine once seemed incongruous with the region's population. This situation has now changed dramatically. Since the 1960s, Aramaic ostraca of the fourth century BCE have emerged in the Negev, primarily from Arad and Beersheba. Most are laconic dockets and tax receipts, but the names are interesting. Although Jewish names dominate at Arad (50% of the names), about 12% of the names are Arabic and 14% Edomite. In contrast, at Beersheba, 40% of the names are Arabic and 20% Edomite, with Jewish names representing only 10% (Klingbeil 1992: pp. 83–84; cf. Zadok 1998: p. 792). This suggests a large Arab population was occupying the Negev in the Persian period.

More dramatically, since 1996, thousands of Aramaic ostraca from Idumea in southern Palestine have been accumulating, dated to Persian and Macedonian kings between 362/1 BCE and c. 300 BCE (Lemaire 2006; Porten and Yardeni 2006). The texts are probably from an archive at Khirbet el-Qôm, 14 km west of Hebron. The onomastic analysis of the published texts indicates that as many as 30% of the names are Arabic and 20% Edomite (Zadok 1998: p. 804; cf. Kloner and Stern 2007: pp. 139–144). Several of these mention a “House of ‘Uzza” (*byt ‘z*), apparently a “shrine of ‘Uzza”, the north Arabian deity (Lemaire 2001: pp. 1157–1158, 2007: pp. 65–67), indicating the presence of an Arab population. In addition, 66 Idumaeen ostraca from nearby Maresha, on the borders of the Persian province of Judah, provide 112 more names, with several dozen Edomite and Arab names. One may even mention “Qedarites” and “Arabs” (Eshel 2010: pp. 43–44, no. 11).

The ostraca are located in the province of “Idumea.” Diodorus first mentions the “*eparchy* of Idumea” (19.95) and the “*satrapy* of Idumea” (19.98) in his account of 312/11 BCE, presumably based on the contemporary Hellenistic historian Hieronymus of Cardia. But the creation of this province during the chaotic years of the warring Hellenistic Diadochi/Diadochoi seems unlikely. Far more attractive is the proposal that the province was created sometime between 385 and 352 BCE (Lemaire 1994: pp. 28–30). The ostraca would then reflect Persian administration of the region at the time. Moreover, the onomasticon suggests “Edomite had a special relationship to Nabataean [Arabian]” names (Zadok 1981: p. 82). The assumption Qedarites supplanted the Edomites, forcing them westward into southern Palestine (Stern 1982: p. 25), must now be rejected: Arabs and Edomites are dwelling together in southern Palestine. Geshem also must now be seen as king of a substantial Arab-Edomite population on the borders of Judah in the fourth century BCE. Numismatic evidence enhances the view that the Qedarites were an organized society in north Arabia. Coins have surfaced in north Arabia and Palestine

bearing the name ŠHRW, the patronym of Geshem bn Šar at Dedan (JS 349 lih), suggesting they are associated with the Qedarite dynasty (Rizack 1984; cf. Lemaire 1990: p. 49; Graf 2015: pp. 294–295; pace Gitler and Tal 2006a: pp. 47–51). Although a coin inscribed possibly with GŠM “Geshem” (Huth and Qedar 1999: pp. 295–297) is problematic (Graf 2015: pp. 295–296), other issues appear to be inscribed with the Arab deities al-‘Uzzā and Manāt (Graf 2015: pp. 296–298), suggesting an Arab derivation. These imitation Athenian or Athenian-styled issues are normally assigned to the period from the late fifth century BCE to the campaign of Alexander the Great (Gitler and Tal 2006b: pp. 146–157; cf. Fischer-Bossert 2010: p. 138), and perhaps into the first century BCE (Huth 2010: p. 234). Issues of local “Arabian” character are now appearing throughout north Arabia (Dumah, Taymā’ [Hausleiter 2010: p. 236 n. 41], Al-‘Ulā, Meda’in Salih, and Petra). At Meda’in Salih, there are more than 100 found from recent excavations and assigned to the Hellenistic period but clearly preceding Nabataean coinage (Augé 2010: p. 277, 2013: p. 130; Bauzou 2015: pp. 219–220), though they may be earlier. At Petra, they appear in an early fourth century BCE context (Graf 2013: pp. 32–33), followed by a succession of early Hellenistic Nabataean anonymous issues (Barkay 2011: pp. 67–73). The large quantity at Hegra is diverse and irregular, with variants, implying the longevity of their production that defies compressing them simply into the second century BCE (Huth 2010: pp. 227–234; pace Rohmer and Charloux 2015: pp. 311–312). Dozens more have been found in the Petra region without a specific provenance and are now in the Jordan Ahli Bank Numismatic Museum collection (seen personally by courtesy of the director, Nayef G. Goussous). Their prevalency in southern Palestine/Transjordan and northwest Arabia suggests a mint existed in the region. The date of the late fifth/fourth century BCE suggests an Arabian authority of some importance and influence for the mint. From the epigraphic perspective, several Thamudic texts (JS 695 + 696) from just southwest of Tabuk in northwest Arabia have been ingeniously re-read and appear to mention a “tribe of Gešem,” the dynastic name of the Qedarites (King 1990: p. 691). In addition, recently published ancient north Arabian (“Taymā’nite”) texts from the southern environs of Taymā’ (Eskoubi 1999) contain references to Qedar and Dedan (Hayajneh 2012: pp. 123–139), lending support to the extension of Qedar to Taymā’ and northwest Arabia (Graf 2016: pp. 444–445; and Hausleiter below). One author of a Taymā’nite text near the oasis indicates he “encamped in QDR” (Eskoubi 20, as reread by Hayajneh 2012: p. 127).

For the western frontier of Qedar, the contribution of the Susa statue of Darius’ designation of Arabia as “Hakor” is important. The reference is normally taken to mean the Arab population of northwest Arabia (e.g. the toponym “Hegra” for Meda’in Salih), but Hellenistic coinage of north Arabia suggests an even larger view. Coins in south Arabian script, perhaps in the east

Arabian Hasitic dialect, are inscribed with the name of a dynast called “Harithat king of Hagar,” perhaps from the region of Dumat al-Jandal (Callot 2010: p. 399). Furthermore, “Gerrha,” the name of a major Hellenistic entrepot in northeast Arabia, has been considered a Graecized version of Aramaic *Hagara* derived from the Hasitic dialect **han-Hagar* (Potts 1984: pp. 82–91; cf. Potts 2010a: pp. 528–529, citing W.W. Müller). The problem is the coins of Harithat are extremely rare, and the only provenanced find comes from Susa (Potts 1991a: p. 108). But if these tenuous and precarious connections are followed, the name Hagar may represent for the Persian period the peoples along the trade route from Tell-el-Maskhuta (Heroonpolis) via Petra/Dumah to Babylon (Eratosthenes in Strabo XVI.4.2 [767]). The size and extent of the Arabian “satrapy” may appear gigantic, but it is essentially commensurate with much of the territory ruled later by the Nabataean kingdom.

Arabs in Persian Sources

There are numerous references to Arabs in the Persepolis Fortification tablets, dating from 509 until 493 BCE. PF 1011 refers to 11^{HAL} [*pu*]-*hu li-ba-ip-ha-ra-[be]* or “Arabian servants” (Henkelman and Stolper 2009: p. 300). These “Arabs” (*ha-ra-pe*) who received rations and payments from officials (PF 1477, 1507, 1534, 1539) are from parts unknown. In contrast, the ethnic term “Arab” appears in the PF texts for specific populations within the Arabian Peninsula. At the end of one “satrapy list” (XPh I. 23-26), the province of “Maka” appears with Sakas, Hinduš (Sindh), Kūšh (Nubia), and Arabia (OP Arabāya), peripheral provinces of the Persian Empire. In the Akkadian versions, OP Maka and Mačiyā is rendered by Maka, Mak, or Qadū (the Akkadian equivalent of OP Makā: see Potts 1990: p. 394), but never by Magan, presumably because the scribes were familiar with Babylonian geographical terminology. The PF tablets mention an Iranian satrap at Maka (PT 679, 680) and several others provide the precise location of Maka. PF 679 indicates a supply of wine for the satrap of Maka was shipped from Tamka (ancient Toake), near the port of Būsahr in the Persian Gulf. Two other PF tablets provide the location of Maka. PFa 17 is a record of “travel rations” for official travelers provided at supply stations along the way: 62 free men and 100 slaves are designated “Arabs” (*ha[r-ba]-ja-be*). PFa 29, a duplicate recording of the same group, reveals they were traveling “from Susa to Maka.” Consequently, the location of Arabia for their native province seems highly probable, and a location of Oman (known as Mazūn from the third century CE and later) seems compelling (De Blois 1989: pp. 160–166), perhaps designating even populations on both shores of the Straits of Hormuz (Potts 1990: p. 294, and Henkelman and Stolper 2009: p. 305). Maka also appears on the Darius Susa statue (as XXIII)

after the “Arabians” (XIX) [the sequence of the enumerations in Achaemenid inscriptions has already been interpreted in §1]. The hieroglyphic word *Mak(a)* is a transcription of OP *Maka*, a toponym used for Oman at the entrance to the Persian Gulf. The clothing for the Maka representative is similar to India, despite the distance separating the Gulf from India (Yoyotte 2013: p. 279 Fig. 294, 301). Evidence for Achaemenid presence elsewhere in the Persian Gulf is less impressive. It is assumed Cyrus the Great acquired after his defeat of Nabonidus in 539 BCE the Neo-Babylonian provinces along the Arabian coast, like Dilmun (Bahrain). But at Qal’at al-Bahrain (ancient Dilmun), the evidence for Achaemenid presence is minimal. Excavations have exposed a large palatial building dated to the Achaemenid period based on the discovery of the so-called “Achaemenid Bowl,” a glass seal with an Achaemenid-style court scene, and other finds (Potts 2010a: pp. 523–527). In addition, a number of PF tablets refer to Ti-ll-man or Ti-ri-man-an (PF 19, 202, 389, 1882), which in spite of the orthographic differences with Til-mun (Dilmun) probably refer to the island (Potts 1990: pp. 350–353, 2010a: pp. 528–529).

Arabs also appear in the Murashu archive as one of the landholding groups or *ḥaṭru* associations, dating between 454 and 404 BCE. These groups occupy a region about 100 km² centered around Nippur. Of the 67 organizations listed (see Stolper 1985: pp. 72–79), the ethnic “Arabs” (*Arabaja*) appears once (no. 56). These organizations are designated by various terms, including geographical or ethnic terms. Many of the latter are from distant regions, such as Phrygians, Carians, and Indians (see Stolper 1985: pp. 60–100). The foreman for the Arabs is “Mušezib-Bel” and the territory they occupy primarily grain and orchard lands. These foreign groups are probably descendants of earlier deported populations, serving now as imperial troops. But the identity of these Arabs remains unknown given the available evidence.

David F. Graf

The Oasis of Taymā’ During the Achaemenid Period by Arnulf Hausleiter

Regional and Local Historical Framework

Although there is no doubt about the historical perception of Arabia in the Achaemenid sources, the available evidence from the oasis of Taymā’ allows currently only a very schematic reconstruction of extent and nature of the relations between this major trading post and the political entity “Achaemenid Empire” with its satrapies. Similar to earlier centuries of the first millennium BCE, historical reconstructions have been mainly relying on allochthonous sources (Hausleiter 2012b). However, the number of indigenous albeit “official” sources increases but is still comparatively limited.

Equally, it is debated whether, following the temporary rule of the last Babylonian king Nabû-na'id (556–539 BCE) at Taymā' (between 552 and 542 BCE), the oasis ever fell under Achaemenid "supremacy" (Stein 2020), most probably in the context of Cambyses' Egyptian campaign in 525 BCE (Graf 1990; above; Jacobs 1994; cf. Eph'al 1982 for a possible nominal integration already under Cyrus; also Graf above), since the postulated existence of an Achaemenid governor at Taymā' has not been confirmed (Potts 2010b, 2011). D. Graf in reviewing the role of Geshem the Arab assigns the Qedarite kingdom a key role in administering north Arabia for the Achaemenids (and also before for the Babylonians) from the end of the sixth to the early fourth century BCE (Winnett and Reed 1970: pp. 115–117; Cross 1986: pp. 390–394; but cf. Eph'al 1982: pp. 213–214; Macdonald 1995; Potts 2010b).

The actual implementation of Achaemenid rule (cf. Jacobs 1994) may have been depending much on topography and environment of the area, most probably resulting in a highly differentiated approach in exercising it on (oasis) "cities" and landscapes in between (Knauf 1990; Anderson 2010). As to the postulated "Arab authority" (Graf above), recent evidence regarding imitations of Athena coins from Hegra/Mada'in Salih let Rohmer and Charloux (2015) suggest a second century BCE date against the established fifth/fourth century BCE dating, thus speculating about a Thamudian involvement in local power – consequently of post-Achaemenid date.

In any case, the economic significance for the incense trade (as recalled by Herodotus 3.97) and strategic location of the oasis as well as the choice of Taymā' as residence by Babylonian king Nabû-na'id may have impacted the degree of attention the Achaemenid leadership drew toward this oasis (cf. Knauf 1990), even though its southerly position may not have been of immediate military use for Cambyses, who seems to have been dealing mainly with locations near the coast and the Egyptian delta.

Taymā'

Archeological and epigraphic evidence – though few primary contexts survived – suggest a continuous occupation of the oasis of Taymā' during the Iron Age through the Achaemenid period, implying the uninterrupted participation of the place to the mid-first millennium BCE trading networks of the Near East (Hausleiter and Eichmann 2018). The oasis was located on a branch northeast of the main route connecting south Arabia with the Levant, significant for the contacts between Arabia and Syro-Mesopotamia (Edens and Bawden 1989; Macdonald 1997).

Taymā's role within these networks underwent considerable change when, coinciding with the end of a potential Achaemenid 'supremacy' (if not involved

in causing it), the dynasty of Liḥyān, whose reign at Dedan (modern al-Khuraybah, al-'Ula) started as early as the late sixth century BCE (Rohmer and Charloux 2015), may have expanded its sphere or political and economic influence from its hometown to Taymā' (Buhl and Bosworth 1960–2007) at the beginning of the fifth century BCE (Stein 2020). This is the earliest attested attempt of exercising control of an oasis-based dynasty in northwestern Arabia over an oasis of a distant location. It is in this context entirely unknown whether this included any territorial dimension beyond that of the oasis itself.

One of the most prominent monuments from Taymā' of the Achaemenid period is the so-called Taymā' stone (Briquel-Chatonnet and Robin 1997; Teima 1: cf. Schwiderski 2004). For the first time seen by C. Doughty (1888) in 1877, it was rediscovered in 1884 by Julius Euting (1914) in connection with Charles Huber (1891), who had identified the monument in 1880. The Imperial Aramaic 24-line text carved in positive letters on the arched stele reports the introduction of a new god, ŠLM HGM, to the existing Aramaean deities of Taymā' ŠLM [of] MḤRM, ŠNGL, and ŠYM (Maraqten 1996; Niehr 2014) – ŠLM (the divine name meaning at the same time “image”) in his various facets without question the main god of the oasis. The stele, according to a reinvestigation of its Aramaic inscription by P. Stein (2014), conceived in the style of an ancient Near Eastern legal document, based on the paleography and the number of regal years, can be attributed to either Darius I or Artaxerxes I (Stein 2020), implying that at this time an Achaemenid ruler, though more probably his local administration, was formally involved when a new god was introduced at the oasis of Taymā'. However, paleographic observations on another monument, the so-called al-Hamra stele (Teima 20: Schwiderski 2004) – also bearing an Imperial Aramaic inscription of the same design reporting the installation of a shrine for ŠLM [of] R/DB at Taymā' (most probably that of Qasr al-Hamra itself), and a newly discovered inscription on a fragment of a sphinx found at Taymā' (object no. TA 6223; Hausleiter et al. 2017) – suggest that the end of the Achaemenid influence on or “rule” over the oasis and the establishment of the rule of kings of the dynasty of Liḥyān may have taken place around the same time, i.e. the beginning of the fifth century BCE. The new inscription on the sphinx fragment mentions a “son of PŠGW Šahrū” with the epithet “king.” If the latter can be reconstructed as “king of Liḥyān,” and if his father is the same PŠGW Šahrū as on the al-Hamra stela, an individual “not defined in terms of his political identity” (Stein 2020), it can be suggested that Achaemenid rule in whichever form it was represented at Taymā' was replaced by that of the first representative of the Liḥyānite dynasty at Taymā'.

Following this hypothesis, Achaemenid supremacy over northwestern Arabia – and Taymā' – might have lasted for about 30 years or little longer.

Archeological Data

Numerous inscriptions in Imperial Aramaic are preserved at Taymā', none of them, however, allowing for any interpretations regarding the Achaemenid "rule" over the oasis. In addition to the Taymā' stone, a number of monuments with religious imagery have been found at Taymā' and attributed to the Achaemenid *period* (italics by the present author), suggesting that there was a substantial increase in artistic production during that time, probably also a reaction of the 10 years' rule of Nabû-na'id. Except for the former, these monuments have been discovered in the context of temples and shrines (Hausleiter 2012a).

Of these, only the building of Qasr al-Hamra, located on a rocky ridge in the northwestern part of the walled oasis settlement, and actually remote from the central part of the ancient settlement, has a building stage which may have been in use during the Achaemenid period (cf. Parr 1989), since the al-Hamra stele (see above) and cube were found still in original position, together with other paraphernalia, in a part of the building which was used as a shrine (Bawden et al. 1980; Abu Duruk 1988; Hausleiter 2012a). Based on the inscription of the al-Hamra stele (Livingstone et al. 1983) it can be suggested that this shrine (Room 1 of the early phase of the building) may have been dedicated to ṢLM R/DB; accordingly, a pedestal has been dedicated to ṢLM R/DB. It was not possible to attribute the other shrine identified at Qasr al-Hamra (Abu Duruk and Murad 1986, 1987, 1988) to any deity, although the presence of a stylized bull's head may point to the deity ṢLM, too (Hausleiter 2012a).

Neither of the residential quarter located in the central part of the ancient settlement of Taymā' nor of the large temple building north of it have remains been identified which can be unequivocally attributed to the Achaemenid period, although the pottery sequence suggests an occupation from the time before the mid-first millennium BCE through the first century CE (Tourtet and Hausleiter 2018). The fact that the typical simple straight-walled medium-sized bowls cannot be restricted further in time can be understood as a sign for a continuous and locally shaped pottery production at the oasis during this period. Occasionally attested carinated bowls of a fine fabric from other contexts seem to be of earlier date.

The large temple (Building E-b1) in its preserved building stages goes back to the Nabataean period (Lora 2017) with preceding building stages dated to the period of the dynasty of Liḥyān. It cannot be excluded that there may have been a building of public character of the time of Nabû-na'id, as indicated, for example, by the concentration of a number of fragmentary cuneiform texts and a stele of this king in filling layers from the surrounding areas (Schaudig 2020). In any case, the building and rebuilding operations of the Nabataean period seem to have destroyed much of the remains of the underlying periods

of the Iron Age. During the time of the dynasty of Liḥyān, royal monumental statues, as in Dadan, were erected next to or in the temple of Taymā' (Hausleiter 2018) in association with the repeated placement of dedicatory inscriptions of Liḥyānite kings (Stein 2020).

Textual evidence on the Taymā' stone refers to a "house" of ṢLM HGM (supposedly a temple), but also 16 palm trees of the king's domain as well as five palm trees from the (ordinary?) fields (Briquel-Chatonnet and Robin 1997; Stein 2014). It is at least possible to assume that this passage refers to royal land of the time of either Darius I or Artaxerxes I, the postulated author of the text (see above). However, it does not tell us much about the details of Achaemenid 'rule' over the oasis, which may possibly have to be characterized as of "middle ground" character. Nevertheless, these are the only and few hints to a sub-division of the irrigated cultivation areas of the oasis among different social (and economic) spheres.

The long-lasting tradition of built graves, which during the early Iron Age feature rectangular chambers with large capstones and a door, reaches also the chronological horizon of the Achaemenid period but continues to be expressed as a purely local tradition. The polychromatic painted pottery known mainly from these graves but also attested in the settlement (Sana'iye Pottery) is attested from the end of the early Iron Age onward (Hausleiter 2014). From the late fifth century BCE onwards inhumation burials are attested at Taymā' replacing the tradition of built burial structures.

Iconography

The left narrow side of the Taymā' stone displays two superimposed panels with figural representations. In the upper panel there is a standing figure whose habitus and dress are characterized by Assyro-Babylonian royal iconography and style (see already Euting 1914). The figure's headdress and staff led to the erroneous interpretation as Babylonian king Nabû-na'id sometimes to be found in the literature; although the content of the so-called verse account, a propagandistic text against this king written during Achaemenid rule (cf. Schaudig 2001; Eichmann et al. 2006), would possibly suggest a clear demarcation, it is probably not surprising if the appropriation of Assyro-Babylonian iconography during the Achaemenid period, as evidenced elsewhere, has to be considered an intentional act, though not really in the sense of continuation.

Above this figure, contrary to the representation of moon crescent/disk, winged sun, and star together with the Babylonian king at Taymā' (Hausleiter and Schaudig 2010) and on the newly discovered rock relief at al-Hā'it, ancient Padakku, (Hausleiter and Schaudig 2016), there is a representation only of a winged sun-disk (Dalley 1986), a symbol also characteristic for the imagery of Achaemenid rulers, but in Mesopotamia already used from the

Mitanni (sixteenth century BCE) period onward recurring to its Egyptian origin of even earlier date.

The figure in the lower field – according to the inscription: the priest Šalmu-ušēzib, son of a probably local individual bearing the Egyptian name Pēt-Osiris (Sperveslage 2019) – wears a long garment, similar to that of the royal figure above, but shows an apparent local type of hairdo. The priest venerates a *bucranium* whose identically sculptured counterpart has been found as an artifact in the recent excavations at Taymā' in the fill near the above-mentioned temple building of the Nabataean period. Together with the representation of a standing bull on a relief (Hausleiter 2012a), found in the same area, these images are united by the representation of bulls' heads or bulls without a sun-disk. This may suggest that the predecessor of the Nabataean temple probably hosted a shrine of ŠLM HGM, assuming that these representations can be directly related to text and imagery on the Taymā' stone implying that ŠLM is represented by the bull or a bull's head (Hausleiter 2012a; see already Knauf 1990).

In turn, representations on the al-Hamra cube and the al-Hamra stele (including, on the former, the figure of a priest most similar to that on the Taymā' stone), of bulls or *bucrania* with sun-disk, all found at the site of Qasr al-Hamra in situ by a Saudi Arabian expedition (Abu Duruk 1988; Bawden et al. 1980), may have to be connected with ŠLM R/DB – the other deities ŠLM MḤRM, ŠNGL and ŠYM probably to be associated with the winged sun-disk, moon crescent/disk, and the star, respectively (Niehr 2014). The occurrence of numerous symbols of Egyptian, Syro-Levantine, and Mesopotamian type of al-Hamra stela and cube can be explained with the cosmopolitan nature (cf. Macdonald 1995) of the local religious iconography; the depiction of an incense burner on both, al-Hamra stele (Sperveslage 2019) and cube, may refer to the role of aromatics of south Arabian origin in the liturgy of that time.

The rock carving of a riding horseman showing stylistic resemblances to Assyrian and Achaemenid iconography (Jacobs and Macdonald 2009; *here* Figure 38.1) is possibly best characterized as “iconographic remain” of Nabû-na'id's stay at Taymā' (Niehr 2014), probably similar to the rendering of the royal figure on the Taymā' stone.

Tombstones/Funerary Stelae

Chronologically falling into the Achaemenid period are the north Arabian tombstones or funerary stelae found at Taymā' (Livingstone et al. 1983; Schiettecatte 2010; Hausleiter 2019; Macdonald 2020; Stein 2020), characterized by the schematic representation of a human face often accompanied by an Aramaic inscription mentioning the deceased individual, usually with his filiation.

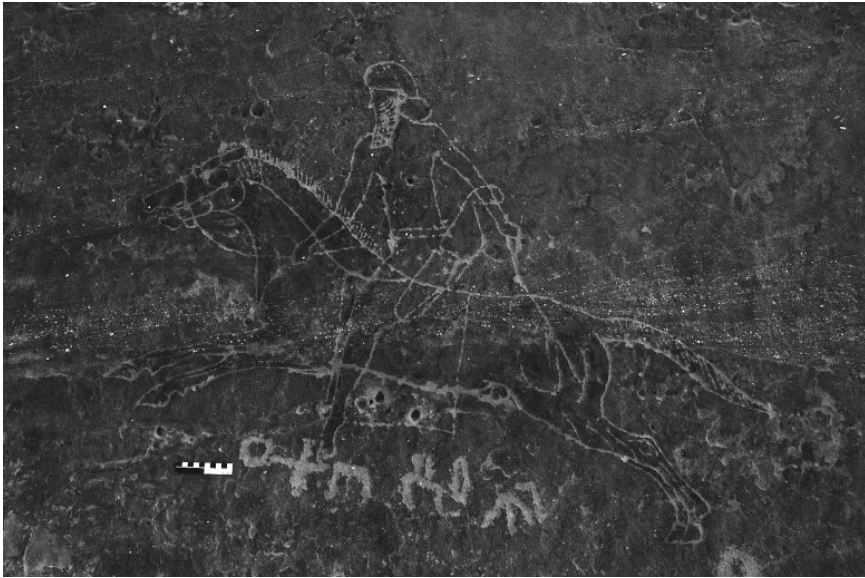


Figure 38.1 Surroundings of Taymā': rock drawing of a horseman.

To this well-known group of objects – none of them found in primary context – more elaborate specimens have to be added, generally featuring the same stylistic framework as the al-Hamra cube. Until now, three funerary stelae with a carved representation of one or more seated figures on stools and tables have been identified, framed by attendants on trunks of palm trees and a frieze of bunches of vine. Two of them have an Aramaic inscription preserved, placing them on paleographic grounds into a period around the fifth/fourth century BCE. Part of this group is a fragmentary stele found by Charles Huber – without inscription, earlier thought to be of Neo-Assyrian date (Potts 1991b). The only one of these monuments originating from excavations had been carved for a woman whose name is preserved in Imperial Aramaic. This object was used by two further women afterward; their pertaining funerary inscriptions are written in Taymā' Aramaic, respectively in Nabataean, the last one written during the reign of king Aretas IV (Macdonald 2020). Although the apparently significant social status of these women cannot be defined closer, it evokes certain associations with leading Arabian women known from eighth to seventh century BCE royal Neo-Assyrian textual sources.

Another funerary stele of the same date shows an erased Aramaic inscription and sculptured scene of a seated figure, generally similar to the abovementioned representations, but possibly taking up motifs rooted in the Syro-Hittite realm (Hausleiter 2019; cf. Macdonald 1997).

Conclusion

At the current stage of analysis, the Achaemenid *period* at Taymā' is characterized by an increasingly contoured picture with regard to visual representations in the archeological record. Whereas little of the architectural evidence can be characterized as unequivocally of Achaemenid in date, epigraphic evidence may indicate the possible transition from a fairly short-time Achaemenid 'supremacy' toward the reign of the regional dynasty of Lihyān, which in turn used monumental statues and inscriptions for the royal representation at Taymā'. As observed in other contexts in the Achaemenid world, the iconographic "pool" of this period seems to have been translated into the local sociocultural system. Instead, there is no archeological proof of Achaemenid rule over north Arabian oases as nodal points of political power, economic, and cultural exchange.

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FURTHER READING

Three contributions (Graf 1990, Knauf 1990, and, more recently, Anderson 2010) have been published on the Achaemenid province of Arabāya, integrating the available historical sources. With regard to history and archaeology on the Arabian Peninsula, in particular Taymā', the contributions by Potts (2011), Hausleiter (2012a,b), and Eph'al (1982) provide relevant information. The catalogue of inscriptions from the excavations at Taymā' has been published by Macdonald (2020).

CHAPTER 39

Egypt

Joachim F. Quack

Conquest

Egypt was the last of the old Near Eastern civilizations to come under Persian rule. At that time it was ruled by the kings of the twenty-sixth dynasty which originated from Saïs and is likely to have descended from a warrior family of Libyan origin. King Amasis ruled for 44 years (570–527 BCE) and established contacts with many rulers of the Mediterranean region, especially in the Aegean. We can suppose that this was at least partly with the intention of building a network against attacks from Asia; he also built up defenses in the eastern Delta. While his rule was prosperous, he had problems with legitimacy, being a usurper who had led a successful rebellion against the previous king, Apries.

Cyrus died before making clear plans for the conquest of Egypt. So it was left to his son and successor, Cambyses, to lead the army against the Nile country (Cruz-Urbe 2003; Kahn and Tammuz 2008). The campaign started probably in 527 BCE and ended successfully in 526 BCE (Quack 2011a). Concerning the reasons for the war, Herodotus (3.1–3) and Ctesias (FGrH 688 F13a) indicate several variants in circulation, all focusing upon a daughter of king Apries called Neïtetis and being either the wife of Cyrus (according to one of the versions, also mother of Cambyses) or of Cambyses himself. At best, that might have been either pretexts or later efforts by pro-Persian Egyptians to link Cambyses in some way, as an avenger or even direct

descendant, with the Egyptian dynasty (comparable to the concept of the Alexander romance to make Nectanebos II, the last indigenous king, the father of Alexander the Great). The real geostrategic reasons for including Egypt in the Persian Empire should be obvious, and it was preceded by taking definitive control of Phoenicia and Cyprus (which previously had been conquered by Amasis; Balandier 2009).

The key to Cambyses' success was an alliance with the tribes of the Sinai who helped him to traverse the waterless desert. He was advised for this by Phanes, a Greek mercenary from Halikarnassos who defected from the service of Amasis and went over to the Persians, providing them with important information about the possibilities of gaining access to Egypt (Herodotus 3.4). Probably less reliable is a divergent report by Ctesias (FGrH 688 F13, § 10), according to which Kombaphis, an influential eunuch of the Egyptian king, delivered the havens and the rest of Egypt to Cambyses. Still, there are possible Egyptian indications for a "collaborator" Ptahhotep (a treasurer) called so and living under Darius I (Posener 1986).

The Egyptian army, led by Psammetichus III, son of Amasis (called Psammenitos by Herodotus and Psammecherites by Manetho according to Africanus, perhaps as a contraction of "Psammetich, son of Neith"), awaited the invaders at the Pelusiac branch of the Nile. In a pitched battle, the Persians were victorious; the Egyptians retreated to Memphis where they were beleaguered and finally had to surrender. The vanquished king was left alive (while his son was killed) for a while but later executed for planning rebellion among the Egyptians. The highly divergent account by Ctesias, who names the Egyptian king Amyrtaios and indicates that he was deported to Susa with a following of 6000 Egyptians, seems less trustworthy, although there are parallels for a fluctuation between Amyrtaios and Psammetichus as names of Egyptian kings.

There are conflicting modern opinions about the degree of violence involved in the conquest (Aufrère 2005). While later claims that all Egyptian sanctuaries were destroyed at that time have been considered by some scholars to be unreliable, even the most pro-Persian contemporary sources do indicate that there were substantial destructions, plundering, and encroachment of the army upon temple territory (Jansen-Winkeln 2002).

Herodotus (2.30) indicates that under Psammetichus, the Egyptians had garrisons in Elephantine against the Ethiopians, in Daphnai against the Arabs and Syrians, and in Marcia against the Libyans, and that the Persians still kept watches in the same places.

According to Herodotus, Cambyses pondered three plans after having conquered Egypt. One was a move against Carthage, which floundered immediately because the Phoenicians who provided the fleet for the Persians refused to go out against their relatives. The other two were operations against the

Oasis of Siwa and against Nubia. While some scholars have doubted the validity of Herodotus' indications, the plans definitely make sense. The western oasis, including Siwa, had been under the control of the Saïtic dynasty, and it would have been an obvious move to secure them for Persia, given their importance for the desert routes (which became increasingly relevant with the growing use of camels at that time). Also campaigns against Nubia were part of the politics of the Saïte kings, thus it would be logical that the Persians followed suit.

Regardless of the sound strategic reasoning, both plans failed on the tactical level. The army sent against the oasis never reached its goal and was said to have perished in a sand storm (Hdt. III, 26). Recently, it was claimed that remnants of this army have been discovered in the Libyan Desert, but there is not yet any formal report to buttress this.

The army against Nubia, led by Cambyses in person, faced logistic problems due to insufficient supplies and finally had to return without (much) success after serious losses (Hdt. 3.25; while in 3.97.2 he mentions that the Ethiopians bordering on Egypt were subjected by him). One of the most (in)famous episodes concerning Cambyses is set here, after his unsuccessful return: According to Herodotus, at that time the Egyptians were holding festivals at Memphis to celebrate the enthronization of a new Apis bull. Cambyses, thinking that they were celebrating his defeat, personally dealt a deadly wound to the animal. As a punishment for his crime, he was smitten with madness by the gods (3.27–30; similar Plut. *De Is. et Os.* 44). Scholars have often discussed the veracity of this statement.

For some time, it was supposed that the actual evidence of Apis burials would disprove the story of Herodotus. We have one epitaph of a bull that was born under Amasis, year 27, died under Cambyses, and was buried in his sixth year; meanwhile, an Apis is attested that was born in year 5 of Cambyses and died under Darius I. Obviously, none of them could be the one born recently and claimed to have been slain by Cambyses. However, since Herodotus tells that the slain one was buried by the priests in secret, we should not expect to find his burial within the normal place in the serapeum. In any case, given that according to Egyptian religious convictions there could be only one living Apis bull at a time, the considerable overlap between the burial of the second and the birth of the first one (at least 15 months) is already a sure sign that something is amiss here, and probably it took the Persian authorities some time to come to the conclusion that accepting the Apis cult (and organizing state-sponsored burials) was ultimately in their own interest and less costly than having to deal with the hurt religious feelings of the Egyptians. While not positively proven, an episode of a slain new Apis in between would by no means be excluded.

Herodotus also ascribes a sacrilegious whipping and burning of the mummy of Amasis to Cambyses (3.16; similar Diod. Sic. 10.14.2). While this cannot

be proven, there is at least some evidence for a persecution of the memory of Amasis in the Persian period (probably limited to the reign of Cambyses). Such a measure would fit well with the effort noted above, in connection with the story about the daughter of Apries, to present Cambyses as legitimate king in contrast to the usurper Amasis.

During Cambyses' stay in Egypt, important decisions were taken concerning the economic situation of the temples (see Chapter 64 Egypt). Cambyses finally left Egypt when a revolt in Persia broke out; he died on the road, as indicated independently by Herodotus (III, 64–66) and a notice on the verso of the demotic papyrus BN 215 (Quack 2011a: p. 234).

Rule and Insurrections

The effects of the foreign rule are likely to have been felt much less intensely by the general population (as long as the overall tax load remained quite similar) but much more profoundly by the elite, whose sources of wealth were seriously cut by the fact that the province had to deliver a surplus to the center of the empire and that foreigners got some of the most important (and lucrative) offices. This is certainly one reason for the fact that archeological remnants from the Persian period in Egypt, especially as far as elite objects are concerned, seem rather elusive.

Still, there was certainly room for some Egyptians to ingratiate themselves with the new ruling power. They have been often dubbed “collaborators” by modern scholars (Huss 1997). Such a label, implying that they worked to the detriment of their own country, might be too negative, given that they achieved benefits for Egyptian institutions also.

The inscription of one of them, Udjahorresnet, is one of the major sources for Egyptian reactions to the Persian kings (Baines 1996). He was commander of ships under the Saïte kings. After the conquest of Egypt by Cambyses, he was made chief physician as well as friend (of the king) and director of the palace (it is less clear whether the Egyptian-style throne-name of Cambyses was really devised at his instigation). He claims to have explained the importance of Saïs to Cambyses and made him drive out foreigners who had settled in the temple area, as well as reinstate the offerings for Neïth (and even to prostrate himself before her in person). Later, he was sent by Darius to Egypt when he was in Elam, in order to restore the temple school at Saïs. Udjahorresnet had a tomb in an elite cemetery at Abusir, and there is an inscription claiming that his statue was restored 177 years after his time (which is likely to fall into the second Persian rule).

Already with the death of Cambyses, problems in Egypt seem to have started. Darius I counted Egypt among those countries that rebelled against

him while he was in Babylon (Bisutun-inscription, § 21). There is some likelihood that testimonies of an Egyptian ruler Petubastis III belong in this period, including letters from a year 1 sealed with his name; and Darius I is not attested in Egypt as a ruler before his regnal year 3. Nothing more is known about this ephemeral ruler, but his name would link him with the traditions of the eastern Delta rulers of the twenty-third dynasty, not with the Saitic house.

The first satrap of Egypt, Aryandes, was installed by Cambyses when he left Egypt and continued in office under Darius I. According to Polyæn. (7.11.7), the Egyptians revolted against his oppressive rule and accepted the Persian rule only when Darius granted a very high amount of money (100 talents) for finding a new Apis bull. If this episode is based on reality, it can only be linked with the time directly following the Apis bull that was buried in year 4 of Darius I, and there it would fit quite well as being shortly after the initial difficulties of re-establishing Persian rule in Egypt. Herodotus IV, 166 f shows Aryandes still in command and leading the army of the Egyptian province for a campaign against Barka. This was the farthest foray of the Persians into Libya, and it is supposed to have taken place at about the same time as Darius' campaign against the Scythians (c. 513/512) (Hdt. 4.145.1). Later Aryandes was accused by Darius of planning rebellion because he was minting coins of very pure silver content, and put to death. The next attested satrap of Egypt was Pherendates.

Darius I is the best-attested of the Persian kings in Egypt. It is well documented that on his initiative all existing laws of Egypt were collected and assembled, probably quite immediately after he reassured Persian rule in Egypt in his third year. Over the next years (until his regnal year 19), they were also translated into Aramaic in order to be accessible to the imperial administration.

Also, Darius finished the canal between the eastern branch of the Nile and the Red Sea; along the route several stelae were erected, with multilingual inscriptions. The Egyptian version presents the king as beloved son of the Egyptian goddess Neith and with an Egyptian translation of the title "great king, king of the kings," and it gives a list of subject countries, while the Persian one adds that he was a Persian who conquered Egypt from Persia. During this time, several Persian expeditions to the greywacke quarries of Wadi Hammamat are attested. That should be linked with the over-life-size statue of Darius I discovered at Susa but, according to the inscriptions, most probably conceived originally for erection at Heliopolis and made from this very stone. The Egyptian inscription on the statue presents Darius in terms of a traditional pharaoh and as son of the god Atum, while the Old Persian inscription claims that the statue was carved so that it was known in future that the Persian man had conquered Egypt (in contrast to the Egyptian text which speaks more neutrally about the commemoration of the name). It is

obvious that these monuments display divergent messages to different audiences. The statue also gives a list of the countries subject to Persia.

It is generally assumed that the temple of Hibis in Kharga Oasis was decorated under Darius I, continuing a building started by the Saïte kings. Actually, things are far from certain. Most cartouches in the inner parts of that temple are left blank (which is normally an indication that during the decoration of such a monument, the political situation was instable, with no clear legitimate ruler) or are, at most, painted in with the name “Darius” in a form not positively attested before the later years of Darius I. It is not proven whether this was Darius I or II. In one case, a Horus name is attested which otherwise is known for Psammetichus II (and different from the safely attested cases for Darius I). A reappraisal might be in order; it is not completely excluded that the decoration started during the Inaros revolt, with later work under Darius II.

Darius I is certainly the Persian king getting the best image among the Egyptian sources; in a note on the verso of the papyrus BN 215 it is told that all districts obeyed him because of the benevolence of his heart. Still, supposed posthumous mentions of him in the context of the authorship of magical and astrological texts have now turned out to be largely based on wrong restorations of badly preserved passages which actually should be ascribed to Nekho II (Nekhepsos) (Ryholt 2011: p. 62).

About 486 BCE, shortly before the death of Darius I, while he was preparing the invasion of Greece, the Egyptians revolted against the Persians (Hdt. 7.1). Their leader can be identified with a king Psammetichus IV whose second year of rule is attested in some demotic contracts belonging to a dossier which starts in the final years of Darius (Vleeming 1991). The name Psammetichus indicates claimed continuity with the twenty-sixth dynasty; it is difficult to ascertain whether this king was really related to the Saïtic royal house. The provenance of the contracts from Hu indicates that the rebels controlled at least part of Upper Egypt. Two inscriptions by Persian functionaries in the Wadi Hammamat, one dating to year 36 of Darius I (486 BCE), the other to year 2 of Xerxes (484 BCE), might delimit the time just before and after the revolt. There is also a demotic letter from Elephantine (pLoeb 1) dating to year 36 of Darius I which speaks of “rebels” moving around the southern border region.

According to Herodotus (7.7.7), Xerxes suppressed the country more heavily than before after having reconquered it and made his brother, Achaimenes, satrap of Egypt. Perhaps this can be linked with an indication in the satrap stela that Xerxes revoked a land grant for the temple of Buto. In any case it is noticeable that at least two substantial demotic private papyrus archives come to an end at about this time, which might be more than simple coincidence.

The most substantial of all Egyptian revolts was the one led by a certain Inaros, who is commonly designated as a Libyan (Hdt. 7.7; the designation as Lydian by Ctesias FGrH 688 F 14 § 36 is an obvious error in the textual transmission; contra Rottpeter 2007) and son of Psammetichus (that might be the Psammetich IV of a previous revolt). The rebellion probably started soon after the death of Xerxes and the ascension of Artaxerxes I in 465 BCE; the most likely date for its beginning is 464 or 463 BCE. An inscription from Wadi Hammamat once adduced to prove continued Persian control there has now been shown to postdate the successful phase of the rebellion (Kahn 2008: pp. 428–429, 433). Inaros' rule is attested in a demotic ostrakon from Manawir in Kharga Oasis (Chauveau 2004), which is dated to the second year of "Inaros, chief of the Bakaloi" (reading with Winnicki 2006). The Bakaloi are a Libyan tribe, thus this note fits with the indication of Thucydides (1.104.1; 1.110.3) that Inaros was a king of the Libyans. Inaros acted together with an Egyptian called Amyrtaios. They started their rebellion at the eastern margin of the Delta, specifically in the city of Mareia, and formed an alliance with Athens which sent battleships to their support. The Persians sent an army against Egypt led by Achaemenes, the uncle of Artaxerxes (Ctesias gives the name as Achaemenides and makes him the brother of Artaxerxes), but they were defeated in the battle of Papremis and Achaemenes was killed. The accounts of the different historians vary as to whether the Athenian help was essential for gaining the battle at Papremis, whether there was rather a separate naval battle in which the Athenian general Charitimides was victorious, or whether the Athenians arrived only after the battle was won and Inaros was in command of practically all of Egypt and two thirds of Memphis.

Still, the Persian garrison at Memphis withstood the siege, and meanwhile the Persians prepared a large army led by Artabazus and Megabyzus which assembled in Cilicia and Phoenicia. It marched against Egypt (probably in 460 BCE) and broke the siege of Memphis. The rebels and their Athenian allies retreated to the island of Prosopitis in the eastern Nile Delta where they were beleaguered for some time, perhaps as long as 18 months. Finally they were forced to capitulate. The Athenians seem to have reached a settlement which allowed them to return, via Libya, to their home. Inaros was led to Persia and finally crucified.

Amyrtaios remained independent in the Egyptian marshes where the Persians were unable to get him, and he had still help from Athens (Thuc. 1.112), but the rest of the country was brought back under Persian control. According to Herodotus (3.15), the Persians were accustomed to giving back the rule even to the sons of rebellious kings, and as examples he gives Thannyras, the son of Inaros, and Pausiris, son of Amyrtaios, indicating that Inaros and Amyrtaios had made the Persians more trouble than anybody else.

After the Persians had regained possession of Egypt, a certain Sarsames was installed as satrap according to Ctesias (FGrH 688 F 14 § 38); probably this is to be recognized as a slightly garbled form of Arsames, who is known as satrap of Egypt between 435 and 407 BCE according to other sources. Since there is no other satrap of Egypt attested after the Inaros rebellion, it is likely that his tenure started directly after the end of that rebellion.

A group of Aramaic documents written on leather and mostly emanating from Arsames and his surroundings is likely to belong to the immediate aftermath of the Inaros revolt, since the documents show how problems were settled concerning property rights related to the effects of an Egyptian insurrection, and in one passage, even the name of Inaros (as leader of the enemies) is, in spite of partial damage, still likely to have stood (TAD I A6.7, 1.7; Quack 2016). The historically most important information is that at some point, the Persians were reduced to being beleaguered, and those who did not make it inside the fortress in time were caught by the rebels.

It is less clear how to evaluate a notice in broken context that Egyptian detachments rebelled, but the Jews of Elephantine did not leave their posts (TAD I A4.5). This is found in a draft for a petition concerning the rebuilding of the Jewish temple of Elephantine after its destruction in 410 BCE, but it stands before the description of the actual events, thus it is likely to be an historical reminiscence (and other drafts of that petition even make mention of the conquest by Cambyses). Unless clear evidence for an Egyptian rebellion after Inaros but before 410 BCE is brought forth, it is most likely that this reminiscence also concerns the Inaros rebellion.

For Darius II, there are no certain contemporary hieroglyphic attestations in Egypt (although it is not impossible that some cases taken to concern Darius I rather refer to him), but he is attested posthumously in the register of the fields of the Edfu temple, where in one passage mention is made of donations up to the year 19 of Darius; and this can only be the final year of Darius II (Vittmann 2011: p. 401). In any case, unpublished demotic ostraca from Manawir (oasis of Kharga) attest his uncontested rule in Egypt.

Shortly after the accession of Artaxerxes II (404 BCE), a new rebellion started in Egypt, led by a Libyan dynast Amyrtaios, who seems also to have taken the name Psammetichus (V). It is possible that he was related to the family of the Saïte kings and/or previous insurgents during the Persian rule, or claimed so. At least in some parts of Egypt (Kharga Oasis and Elephantine), Artaxerxes II was still acknowledged as king until his third/fourth year (401 BCE). A Persian army under the command of Abrocomas, camped in Phoenicia and poised for countermeasures in 401 BCE, never really set out for Egypt because of the inner-Persian conflict between Artaxerxes II and his younger brother Cyrus (see Chapter 32 From Darius II to Darius III).

The last evidence of Persian rule is found in an Aramaic oath from Elephantine (TAD II B7.2) dated to year 4, Paophi 18 of Artaxerxes (January 18, 401 BCE, if this is really Artaxerxes II). Still, the last documents acknowledging the Persian rule hint already at difficulties or even a precarious situation, especially a contract from Elephantine (TAD II B3.13) dated to year 4, month Thot of Artaxerxes II (December 2–31, 402 BCE). It documents that a mercenary borrows grain to be repaid from the rations which were given to him by the royal treasury. It seems as if the Persians were no longer able to assure the provisioning of their soldiers on a regular basis. In his year 5 (June 21, 400 BCE), Amyrtaios was recognized as king even in Elephantine (TAD II B4.6). Tamos, admiral of Cyrus the younger, took the fleet to Egypt after the death of Cyrus, but he was killed there by Psammetichus (V) together with his sons.

The Struggle for Keeping Independence

While Egypt regained independence with the successful rebellion of Amyrtaios, the following decennia were dominated by Persian efforts at recapturing it, with occasional Egyptian counterattacks, both sides strongly relying on Greek mercenaries. Egypt was characterized during this time by rather precarious power structures, with frequent rebellions and internecine fighting. The dynasties were short-lived and there was no direct succession from father to son over more than three generations. Amyrtaios remained the sole king of the twenty-eighth dynasty, and rather soon after the final victory against the Persians, in 399 BCE, he was driven from power by Nephertites from Mendes, the founder of the twenty-ninth dynasty; the change in ruler is mentioned in an Aramaic letter from Elephantine (TAD I A3.9).

The Persians made several substantial efforts to gain back Egypt. A first effort, delayed by dealings in Asia Minor and the Aegean, took place around 385–383 BCE (according to other scholars 390–387 BCE). It failed ultimately, although little is known about the details (Isoc. Paneg. 4.140–141). Egypt (under Hakoris), in league with Cyprus, went into the offensive and for a short time controlled the Levantine coast up to Cilicia. A counter-campaign, led by Tiribazus and Orontes, was victorious on Cyprus around 381/380 BCE, which left Egypt without allies. At that time, the Athenian general Chabrias put up a strong defense system in the eastern Delta.

Under the command of Pharnabazus and Iphicrates, Artaxerxes II sent out a long-prepared expedition in 373 BCE. They succeeded in breaking through the defense lines at the Mendesian branch of the Nile, but ultimately failed, due to the resistance of the Egyptian army (under king Nectanebes I) and especially the rising Nile inundation.

The following period of weakness in Persia (due to the satrap revolt) was used by Egypt to prepare a large military expedition to Syria led by Tachos/Teos, the son of Nectanebes I, in 361/360 BCE. For a moment it seemed successful, but the inner-Egyptian developments finally brought it to naught: Samaus, the uncle of Tachos, who had been left in Egypt for directing its administration, instigated a rebellion and made his son, Nectanebos (II) (who had commanded the indigenous part of the Egyptian army), king. In that, he was helped by Agesilaos of Sparta and his Greek mercenaries. Tachos fled to Persia where he was well received by Artaxerxes II and even appointed as a general in the war against Egypt (but it is not clear whether an army was actually sent out; there are indications that Artaxerxes III, Ochus, at a time when he was still crown prince, made war against Egypt).

A substantial army was led by Artaxerxes III personally against Egypt in the winter of 351/350 BCE. It was driven back by the Egyptians. The recently published beginning of the Apis embalming ritual (Meyrat 2013) indicates that the king Nectanebos II was replaced at the ceremony by his eldest son because he was fighting against the Persian king.

A new effort by Artaxerxes, probably to be situated in 343/342 BCE (contra Depuydt 2010; see Quack 2011a: p. 230), was finally successful, although it had to face serious problems in traversing the Sinai and lost soldiers in the quicksand (Agut-Labordère 2008). Facing Pelusium, the Persian army was split up into three contingents. One of them, led by Egyptian guides, managed to get hold of a “hidden place” on the Nile and defeated a part of the Egyptian army. When news of the loss reached Nectanebos, he left his position and retreated to Memphis. Then, the city garrisons of the Delta surrendered to the Persians, hoping for clemency. Nectanebos II fled to Nubia, taking with him the greater part of his riches (perhaps by negotiations with the Persians and leaving his son, general Tjai-Hapimou, as security).

The Second Persian Rule

The second Persian rule over Egypt (Devauchelle 1995) is designated as the thirty-first dynasty in scholarship. After the recapture, Artaxerxes III had some coins minted with a demotic Egyptian inscription “Artaxerxes the king.” He plundered a lot of gold and silver from the temples and ransomed their records. He is also, like Cambyses, accused of killing the Apis bull.

Several Egyptian biographies of that time speak of trouble (Menu 2008), but none clearly names a ruler. Onnophris, Somtutefnacht, and Tjai-Hapimou all indicate that they had been taken to Asia but could come back to Egypt.

Sometime during this time, there was also a short reign of a king bearing the clearly non-Egyptian name Khaba(ba)sh (Moje 2010). He is attested in a

contract made during his first year at Thebes (by a scribe otherwise documented between 330 and 324 BCE, so his reign should be set shortly before the Macedonian conquest of Egypt), and for his second year in Memphis by an Apis stela. Another, posthumous, document, the satrap stela of the future Ptolemy I, renews a land grant made by him for the temple of Buto in the delta. The wide geographical span makes it likely that Khababash was in control of most or even all of Egypt, although he is not mentioned in any single Greek historian's record. The Satrap stela indicates that he tried to reinforce the river mouths against Asiatic invasions.

Further problems are created by a king Horus, son of Isis, son of Osiris, whose second regnal year is attested in a marriage contract from Qarara in Middle Egypt. Scholarly proposals to see in him a rebel king during the Ptolemaic time (c. 130 BCE) are problematic (Quack 2011b: pp. 123–126), and it is not excluded that this is another short-lived indigenous dynast during the thirty-first dynasty.

After the battle of Issos, Amyntas, a leader of Greek mercenaries who had fought on the Persian side, tried to invade Egypt (333 BCE). The Persians under Mazaces first withdrew to Memphis, and then made a sally, slaying Amyntas and his men. When Alexander the Great arrived in Egypt (332 BCE), Mazaces handed over Egypt to him, ending Persian rule on the Nile for many centuries.

Later Reflections on Persian Rule

Already texts of the thirtieth dynasty refer to damage done by the “foreigners” – probably the Persians (Klotz 2010: pp. 147 and 152–154). The clearest and most reliable testimony on the Persians in later Egyptian texts is a recurrent theme of early Ptolemaic texts that Egyptian statues had been displaced to Asia by the Persians and were brought back by the Ptolemaic kings (Thiers 2007: pp. 100–106).

Specifically the second Persian domination is seen as a time of harsh oppression and manslaughter in a short section of the “Demotic Chronicle” (4.20–5.4). Since the preserved sections say hardly anything about the first Persian occupation, it cannot be judged whether the second one was felt to be more oppressive.

The Prophecy of the Lamb mentions the “Medes” in only one single, highly fragmentary passage of doubtful interpretation. Otherwise, it is more clearly concerned with the Assyrians.

It has been proposed to understand a lament on the desecration and destruction of a temple attested in a Ptolemaic-period hieratic papyrus as alluding to the troubles of the Persian invasion (Burkard 2003); however,

they are never explicitly mentioned in the preserved parts, and other periods of invasion, such as the Hyksos period, are at as least as likely candidates (Quack 2012: p. 30).

There is a demotic tale which probably mentions Cyrus, but mixes up historical motives of the Ethiopian and the Persian rule over Egypt (Quack 2016b: p. 53). Generally, demotic narrative texts purporting to be set in the time of the Assyrians tend to contain some elements of unmistakably Persian derivation like the organization in satrapies. This is a telescoping of the events probably due to the long time-span between the actual events and the preserved manuscripts which mainly date to the Roman imperial period. The Coptic story of Cambyses is an interesting case of very late reflections on the Persian conquest, mixed up with the Neo-Babylonian conquest of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar.

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CHAPTER 40

Nubia

Angelika Lohwasser

South of the ancient boundary of Egypt at the first cataract, the region is called Nubia (Figure 40.1). This is the realm of the kings of Kush, who reigned up to the confluence of the Blue and the White Niles. Kush, which was called Aithiopia by the classical authors, is the target of the last and futile attack of the Persian king Cambyses in the *Histories* of Herodotus.

Nubia

Scholars phase the history of the Kingdom of Kush in the Napatan (ninth century to fourth century BCE) and the Meroitic (fourth century BCE to fourth century CE) periods. The heyday of the Napatan kings was their domination over Egypt and Kush during the twenty-fifth dynasty (c. 721–663 BCE). After their retreat, forced by several Assyrian attacks against Egypt, the kings continued to use Egyptian cultural traits beside their indigenous Kushite ones. It is most necessary to stress that up to the beginning of the Meroitic period the Kushites used the Egyptian language and Egyptian hieroglyphs to write official documents, although we know that their own language, Meroitic, was used at least since the Egyptian New Kingdom, where it is attested sporadically in personal names. Thus we have to bear in mind that the historical documents of the Napatan phase of the Kingdom of Kush are written in a foreign script and language (Egyptian) or written by complete foreigners (classical authors). Therefore we have to consider the archeological sources,

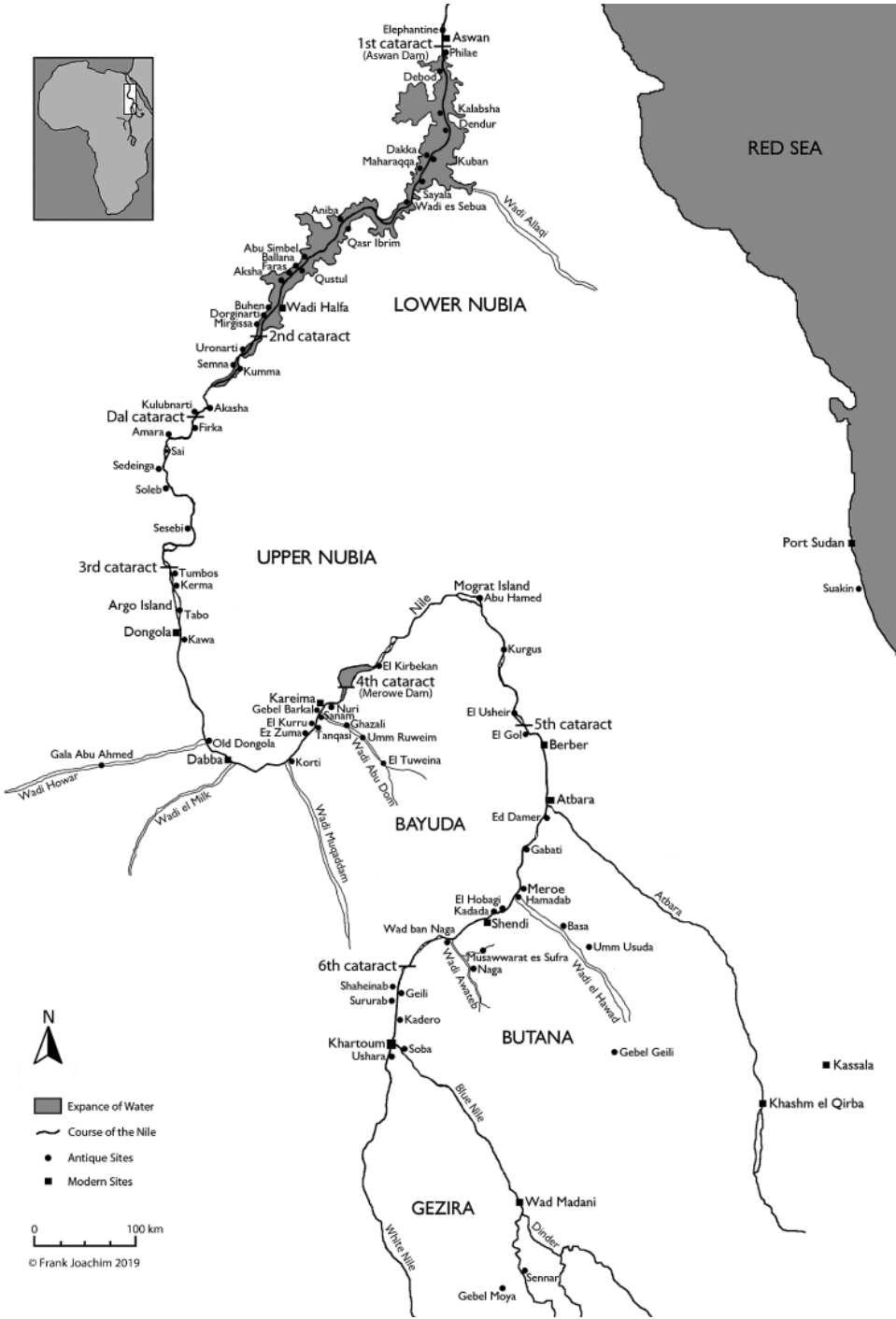


Figure 40.1 Map of Nubia. Source: Reproduced by permission of Frank Joachim.

too, when we compile the evidence for the situation south of Egypt during its Persian occupation.

Archeological and Written Evidence in Nubia 525–330 BCE

Lower Nubia especially between the first and the second cataracts is barren and was only sparsely inhabited in former times. South of Lower Nubia, the landscape of upper and southern Nubia is much more fertile. This is where the heartlands of the Kingdom of Kush were located. During the middle and late Napatan periods, which were contemporary with Achaemenid Persia, the administrative capital of the kingdom was situated in Meroe, whereas the sacral capital remained at the traditional holy area around the Jebel Barkal, at Napata. The kings received their crown in the great Amun temple in front of the Jebel Barkal, and they were buried under the pyramids of Nuri on the opposite bank of the Nile. The cemetery of the administrative elite was already installed at Meroe itself. Our knowledge about the material culture of this time relies mostly on the burials of the royal court, since we lack temples and settlements datable to the period. The only exception up to now is the fort of Dorginarti in Lower Nubia. Several expeditions were sent to Lower Nubia to survey what was to become the basin of Lake Nasser. That is why we can state that Lower Nubia is one of the archeologically best-known regions of the world, but only a part of the results have been intensively studied and published up to now. The datation of the fortress of Dorginarti in the time of the Persian occupation of Egypt was not done until 1992 (Heidorn 1991, 1992), and maybe there will be an increase in sources like this when all the material is studied.

The archeological material revealed in the fortress of Dorginarti hints at a guardian function for trade and diplomatic exchange between Egypt (and beyond) and Kush (also as a corridor to inner Africa) along the Nile (Heidorn 1992: p. 147). Since there are attested several conflicts between the Kushites and Saite Egypt, it is also possible to interpret the fortress as a Saite outpost. This may be a result of the military activity of Psammetik II (595–589 BCE), which led to Egyptian control of Lower Nubia (Török 2009: p. 362). The Kushite reoccupation of this region was accomplished during the revolt of Inaros (463/2–449 BCE), thus in the description of Herodotus (see below) the Kingdom of Kush extends from the first cataract upstream of the Nile (Török 2009: p. 367).

There are several objects of Mediterranean provenience found in the tombs of Nuri and Meroe. The most prominent artifact is the Attic plastic rhyton,

found in pyramid 24 of the southern cemetery of Meroe and inscribed by the potter Sotades. It illustrates – besides an Amazon on horseback – the fighting between Greeks and victorious Persians and can be dated to about 470 BCE. This specimen as well as other Mediterranean products, where only sherds survive, may be interpreted as diplomatic gifts by Persian officials (Török 1989: pp. 69–71 and Appendix).

Apart from the sparse archeological evidence of this time, there are three royal inscriptions casting light on the internal situation as well as some enigmatic interactions with Persian Egypt. Although the inscription of Irike-Amanote (end of the fifth century BCE) on a wall of the temple of Kawa does not mention external affairs, Török (2009: p. 367) states that the titulary of this king declares a claim to the regency of Egypt. Perhaps this king already formulated the political program to expand the realm to the north which was carried out by Harsiotef (first half of the fourth century BCE). The stela of Harsiotef, erected in the court of the great Amun temple at Jebel Barkal, reflects his ascent to the throne, several victorious military undertakings, donations, building activities, and festivals. In the course of one of these battles Harsiotef even reached Syene (Aswan), the southernmost town of Egypt. The buffer zone between Kush and (Persian) Egypt was under Kushite control at that time. The stela of king Nastasen (second half of the fourth century BCE) is perhaps the most interesting one in this context. Like the other great royal stelae of Kush, it starts with his enthronement and covers military activities as well as donations and festivals. In line 39 the text says: “xmbswdn came. (I) had a force of bowmen go from Tshare. Great slaughter. (I) seized all his ..., (I) captured all the transport ships of the chief. ...”¹ The name of the foe xmbswdn was thought to be Cambyses (Schäfer 1901: pp. 45–50), but after the archeologically-based dating of Nastasen to the end of the fourth century BCE by G.A. Reisner (1923: pp. 18, 59, 63), the contemporaneity of this Kushite king with the Persian king Cambyses was dismissed. Hintze (1959: pp. 17–20) interpreted the name as the ephemeral pharaoh Khababash, who was a local ruler in Egypt about 343–337 BCE. Since his realm was in Lower Egypt and the reading of the hieroglyphs for “Khababash” is not without problems, the identification of the foe of Nastasen is still open for discussion.^{2,3}

Interaction Between Nubia and Achaemenid Persia

The most comprehensive classical source on the relationship between Nubia and Persia is the *Histories* of Herodotus of Halikarnassos.⁴ In his third book he describes the conquest of Egypt by Cambyses and his attack on Aithiopia (= Kush). The planned – and failed – war is the leading story for introducing

the Aithiopians in a *logos*. This is the most extensive account of the Aithiopians in antiquity, and it is striking that we lack information on a clash between Persians and Kushites in the archeological record.

The early utopian views of Aithiopia also occur in Herodotus' excursus on that country (3.17–26). But beside mythical allusions he refers to gifts paid to the Persian king (3.97) and the Kushites in the Persian army (7.69). There might have been a real attack by Cambyses against Kush, and at least the people in the buffer zone had to deliver gifts (ebony, gold, and elephant tusks). Perhaps Dorginarti was the collecting point for these "gifts," originating from further south. Kushites are depicted as the last of the tributaries of the empire in the reliefs of the Apadana at Persepolis. In the later years of Darius I, "Kushiya" is included as one of the tributary nations supporting the throne. But since these depictions may be a reflection of the Persian king's adoption of Egyptian kingship ideology, the evidence is not conclusive of Persian domination of Nubia.

Among the foreign contingents in the army of Xerxes also Aithiopians are recorded. Herodotus describes them as very exotic – wearing leopard skins, smearing their bodies half red and half white, and carrying long bows. They are interpreted as people of the southern fringe of the Kushite Empire, but neither the custom of painting the body nor of wearing leopard skins during a battle is attested in indigenous Kushite sources.

The costume of the Kushites depicted on the Persian monuments differs considerably from the iconography we know from Kushite reliefs. Yet there exist Achaemenid but Egyptianizing ivories – one of them depicting a Kushite – which were made using Kushite ivory. Perhaps ivory as a material was imported or presented as a (diplomatic) gift, but the Achaemenid artist never saw a Kushite with his own eyes.

Conclusion

Since we know very little about the late Napatan period in Kush, we can only hypothesize about any connection with Achaemenid Persia. It is conceivable that in the course of overrunning Egypt, Cambyses invaded Lower Nubia, too. The fort of Dorginarti may be the most southern outpost of the Saite Empire at the beginning, but also of the Persian Empire. It may well have served as the collecting point of (trading) goods from Kush. Several finds from the Mediterranean in Kush, as well as the use of Kushite ivory in the Achaemenid artwork and the notes of Herodotus on Kushite "gifts" for the Persian court, let us suggest at least diplomatic gift exchange, if not trade in exotic materials. Even before the withdrawal of the Persian dynasty from Egypt in 404 BCE, Lower Nubia was again under Kushite control, as we learn

from the inscriptions of Harsiotef and Nastasen. There is no indication that the Persians invaded Lower Nubia again in their second reign over Egypt (third dynasty, 342–332 BCE).

NOTES

- 1 FHN II: 485; translation by R.H. Pierce.
- 2 The different interpretations are summarized in Peust (1999) (with literature).
- 3 For the following section, see Morkot (1991: pp. 324–328).
- 4 The text as well as translation and commentary to Herodotus on the Aithiopians are collected in FHN I: 302.331 (with literature). See also the comments in Bichler (2001: pp. 29–34).

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CHAPTER 41

The Cyrenaica

André Heller

Introductory Remarks

Cyrenaica or Cyrenaea stretched from Arae Philaenorum (modern Ras al-A'ali) in the west, where Carthaginian territory began, to Catabathmus megas (modern Solum) in the east (Figure 41.1). The name is anachronistic as Greeks and Persians called the area Libyē and Pūtu, respectively. Libyē could especially describe Cyrenaica, but the Greeks also used it for the entire African continent except Egypt. Putāya (“Libyans”), meanwhile, probably deriving from Egyptian Pwd>Pjyt (Posener 1936: p. 186; Osing 1980: p. 1016), is attested only three times in Persian inscriptions. Besides Cyrene, the other Greek cities were Barca (modern El Merj), Euhesperides (modern Benghazi, founded c. 575 BCE), Taucheira (modern Tobra, founded c. 625 BCE), and Cyrene’s harbor Apollonia (modern Susah). These five major cities later became known as Pentapolis.

The main source for Cyrenaica under Persian rule is Herodotus, who might have visited Cyrene. He devotes a quarter of the fourth book of his *Histories* to the city’s foundation, to its later history down to 513 BCE (4.150–167. 200–205), and to the Libyan tribes living west of Egypt (4.168–199). Unfortunately, relations between Cyrene and Persia are only the background of his proper theme, namely queen Pheretima’s revenge on the Barcians and her fate (Gianguilio 2011). Her deeds are also commemorated in the anonymous “Treatise on women” (Gera 1997: pp. 164–178, 212–213).

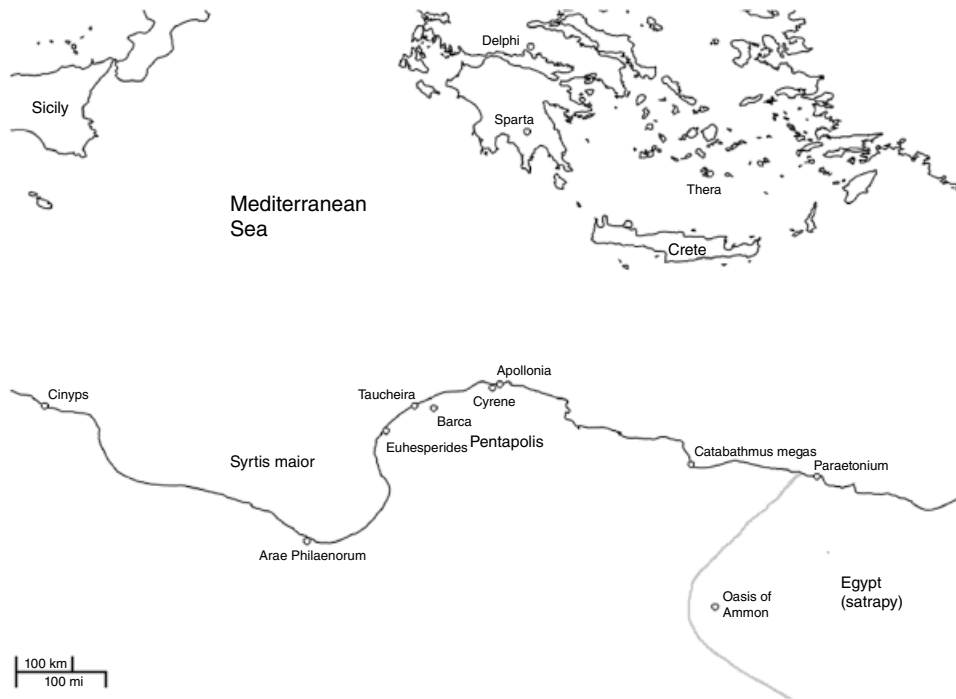


Figure 41.1 Map of Cyrenaica; the map was created by using AWMc: À-la-carte MAP (<http://awmc.unc.edu/awmc/applications/alacarte>).

The earliest testimonies on Cyrene are Pindarus' Pythian Odes with their scholia. Scattered evidence derives from Thucydides and Diodorus Siculus, among others. In the late second century BCE, Menecles of Barca wrote *Libyka* ("Libyan histories"), of which only two fragments are extant.

Modern handbooks and essays on the Persian Empire dedicate only short remarks on Cyrenaica. The best account on Cyrene and Persia and the chronology of the reign of Arcesilaus III are Mitchell's articles (1966 and 1974). Archeological excavations add little to our knowledge.

Cyrenaica Before the Persian Conquest

Colonists from Thera under Battus' leadership founded Cyrene in 631 BCE (Austin 2008); kings from the Battiad line ruled Cyrene for eight generations (Herodotus 4.163.2). Some 50 years after the foundation, Battus II attracted new settlers from the Peloponnese and the Aegean Islands with the help of the Delphic oracle. The need for land brought Cyrene into conflict with the neighboring Libyans, whose king, Adicran, allied with Egypt. The Cyrenians defeated the united troops at Irasa; hence, general Amasis expelled pharaoh

Apries, who took refuge with the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar II. The attempt to reclaim his throne with Babylonian help failed in 567 BCE and Apries was killed (Leahy 1988). Troops from Cyrene (Pūtu-Yaman “Greeks of Libya”) fought on Amasis’ side, as Edel (1979) has convincingly demonstrated. Around 560 BCE, Arcesilaus II’s harshness resulted in civil strife; inhabitants of Cyrene emigrated to the Libyan settlement Barca under the king’s brothers (Herodotus 4.160.1). In the war between Cyrene and the Libyan-Barcian coalition, Arcesilaus lost nearly 7000 hoplites (a number barely credible) and was murdered not long afterwards. Under his successor, Battus III, rivalries broke out between old and newly arrived settlers. Demonax of Mantinea settled differences by restricting the royal power to the religious sphere and transferring the other privileges to the people (Hölkeskamp 1993). Battus also formed an alliance with Amasis, who married Battus’ daughter, Ladice (Herodotus 2.181).

Persian Rule Over the Cyrenaica

When Cambyses conquered Egypt in 525 BCE, Cyrene and Barca as well as the neighboring Libyans surrendered without fight and sent tribute (Herodotus 3.13.3–4; Diodorus Siculus 10.15). Although Cambyses was displeased by the 500 minas of silver offered by Arcesilaus III, he sent Ladice, the widow of the meanwhile deceased Amasis, back to Cyrene. Cambyses’ anger is probably Herodotus’ invention to acquit Cyrene of medism. Besides this date, Herodotus gives no chronological hint for Arcesilaus’ reign. Backed by Persian support, Arcesilaus reclaimed the old royal rights, but met fierce opposition and was forced to flee to Samos. Arcesilaus’ mother, Pheretima, went to the Cypriote king, Euelthon of Salamis. A scarab from Cyrene with her name in Cypriot syllabic script depicting the Egyptian god Bes confirms this episode (Wright 2007b). Flight and choice of refuges suggest connection between Arcesilaus’ failure and Egypt’s rebellion from Persia. In 518 BCE, Darius reconquered Egypt and reinstated Aryandes as satrap (Cameron 1943: pp. 309–312). While Pheretima unsuccessfully appealed for an army, her son gathered enough Samians to win back his throne. Some historians (e.g. Noshay 1968) put these events before 525 BCE, but this causes serious chronological and historical problems, as Mitchell (1966: pp. 99–103; 1974) has shown. After his return, Arcesilaus killed or expelled his opponents, but then retired to Barca to his father-in-law, Alazeir, leaving his mother in charge. There exiled Cyrenians together with king Alazeir assassinated him. His mother could not maintain Cyrene and fled to Aryandes. The motif of the murder must be liberation from Battiad rule and Persian yoke. Aryandes reacted quickly and dispatched the Egyptian army and fleet (Högemann 1992:

pp. 314–317) to quell rebellion and restore Battiad rule. Pheretima's vengeance played, if at all, only a minor role in his decision. Herodotus (4.145.1) synchronizes the Libyan expedition with Megabazus' operations on the Hellespont (514/3 BCE). The picture of the Libyan expedition that emerges from Herodotus is difficult to reconcile with the other sources. Barca was captured by treachery after a nine-month siege and the Barcians were deported to Bactria. The deportation is ahistorical (De Sanctis 1931) and in fact inspired by Barciani, who are identical with the Hyrcanians (Schmitt 1979: pp. 129–131). Aeneas Tacticus (37.6–7), who wrote around 360 BCE, also names Barca, while later sources like Menecles substitute Cyrene instead. Although Herodotus seems to know of a Persian attack on Cyrene, the story shows bias by a Cyrenian source. In 1966, archeologists discovered many mutilated statues buried in a favissa outside the city walls of ancient Cyrene (Goodchild et al. 1966). Either the Persians destroyed the extramural sanctuary of Zeus to put pressure on Cyrene or they used the statues for the construction of a siege mound, as Wright (2007a) supposed by comparing analogous findings from Cyprus. Euhesperides was the westernmost point the expedition reached. Herodotus' narrative ends with Pheretima's horrible death in Egypt; he says not a word on the Persians' settlement concerning Cyrene. From Polyaeus (8.47), however, we can conclude that from 513 BCE Battus IV ruled Cyrene. The expedition was successful, as Libyans are listed as subject peoples in Darius' inscriptions after 513 BCE (Cameron 1943: pp. 307–309). According to Herodotus (3.91.2), Libyans, Cyrene, and Barca belonged to the sixth *nomos* (Egypt) and paid an annual tribute of 700 talents, but did not have the status of a satrapy, although some historians claim so (Jacobs 1994: p. 173).

At the same time, Dorieus of Sparta tried to settle the fertile territory around the river Cinyrs (modern Oued Ca'am), but was expelled by Carthaginians and Libyans (Herodotus 5.42); the venture was supported by Thera but not officially by Cyrene. Probably at the beginning of Xerxes' reign, Barca refused to pay tribute and was again captured by stratagem (Polyaeus 7.28.1). Cyrene is not among those states the Greeks sent messengers to on the eve of the Persian invasion (Herodotus 7.145.2). Herodotus (7.71, 86.2, and 184.4) mentions Libyans as part of the Persians' levy, but neither Cyrenians nor Barcians.

After the Persian defeats at Salamis and Plataeae (480/79), ties between Greece and Cyrene grew stronger. Pausanias (6.19.10) attests a treasury of the "Libyans in Cyrene" in Delphi. In 474 BCE, Telesicrates of Cyrene won the hoplite race in Delphi (Pindarus, Pythian Ode 9), 462 BCE Arcesilaus IV triumphed in the chariot race there, and two years later at the Olympic Games (Pythian Odes 4 and 5 with their scholia). Participation in the Panhellenic games, however, is no proof for growing distance to Persia. More importantly, Pindarus' odes reflect the internal problems of the king, as he emphasizes the

mythological legitimization of the Battiad house. Arcesilaus IV augmented Euhesperides with additional settlers, perhaps as refuge for him. Only a few years later, Arcesilaus and his son, Battus, were killed. Thereafter, aristocrats who maintained friendly relations with Sparta ruled Cyrene. Following a merciless civil war, Cyrene became a democracy after 402/1 BCE. It is tempting to connect Arcesilaus' internal problems with Persian weakness, shown by the destruction of their fleet at Eurymedon and the revolt of Egypt (463–457 BCE, according to Kahn 2008) under the Bacalian (a tribe living between Euhesperides and Barca) prince Inarus (Winnicki 2006). After their defeat, the rest of the Athenian expedition force escaped to Cyrene and sailed home (Thucydides 1.104. 109–110; Diodorus Siculus 10.77.2–5). It is possible to connect the Athenians' arrival with the overthrow of the monarchy; however, without evidence in the sources, this is highly conjectural. In any case, it might be concluded with some confidence that the Battiads' overthrow brought to an end the Persian hegemony over Cyrenaica. Beyond that, the Persians lost control over Egypt several times in the following decades. As a result, the continuity of Persian influence on Cyrene and Barca is very doubtful.

When in 332 BCE Alexander the Great marched via the coastal road to Paraetionium (modern Marsa Matrouh) on his way to Siwah, Cyrenian envoys came to meet him, presenting him with magnificent gifts. This resulted in friendship and treaty with the king (Arrian, *Anabasis* 3.3.3; Curtius Rufus 4.7.9; Diodorus Siculus 17.49.2), which secured Cyrene's independency.

Cyrene and Barca were renowned for their horses and chariots; their main export good was the famous silphion plant (Amigues 2004), which is depicted on coins. Under Battus IV the temple of Zeus Ammon was built. It was probably this equation with Zeus Lycaeus that helped to increase Ammon's popularity in Greece (Austin 2008: pp. 213–214). Cyrene's economic power is reflected by the total of 805 000 medimni of grain, sent to different Greek states to relieve famine after 330 BCE (Tod 1948: no. 196).

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CHAPTER 42

The Levant

Oskar Kaelin

The Levant and the Persian Empire

Asymmetries in information make a balanced reconstruction of Levantine history in Persian time difficult (cf. Elayi 2008 on Byblos and Sidon). Archeology has only lately shown a real interest, and is hampered by illicit diggings, forgeries, or still unpublished results of important excavations (Grabbe 2004: pp. 54–69). The available historical texts seem eloquent, but focus, sometimes tendentiously, on their respective interests. Classical texts note the Persian actions in the Mediterranean and along the Levantine coast, but usually ignore the landlocked regions (Grabbe 2004: pp. 16–20, 118–131). Old Testament texts are concerned with the problems ensuing by the return of the descendants of the former elite from Babylonian exile to Judah, the rebuilding of Jerusalem as a regional center, and the reshaping of political and religious structures. As an ideological support, narratives were created, compiled, edited – with further impact on biblical and cultural history. But as there is no confirmation outside the Bible, their interpretation is debated (Keel 2007: §§ 1261–1570; Liverani 2005: pp. 250–368; Grabbe 2004: pp. 2, 70–106, 269–346; Eph'al 1998: pp. 106–110).

Chronologies are far from clear, even when backed by archeology and epigraphy. Many kings are known from coins, but only by an initial letter, which cannot always be matched self-evidently to names from other sources (e.g. Elayi 2006: pp. 18–19, 23). Even for Sidon, the best-documented site, the

available information only allows us to reconstruct a plausible, but only probable, sequence of events (e.g. Jacobs 2006; Stucky 2005: p. 23).

People of the Levant

The Lebanon mountain range and its extensions divide the Levant into two main regions: the coast and the landlocked regions. Though part of one satrapy, the people and regions had different cultural backgrounds and political interests. By migration, trade, or forced deportations (see Chapter 61 Deportations) the population of the different regions, organized as city-states or nomadic tribes, had grown multiethnic, multilingual, and multicultural. The coast cities were melting pots with people from Syria, Asia Minor, Cyprus, Greece, Egypt, northern Africa. In the landlocked regions, names in the Aramaic ostraca from Beer-Sheba and Tell Arad (fourth century BCE) are Arabic, Edomite, common Semitic, and Hebrew (Grabbe 2004: p. 59); in the texts of Wadi ed-Daliyeh (c. 375–335 BCE), mostly Hebrew, but also Persian, Aramaic, Phoenician, Edomite, and Akkadian (Grabbe 2004: p. 56; Eph'al 1988: pp. 148–149).

Demonyms as Aramaens, Hebrews, Palestinian, Arabs, Ashdodites, Ammonites, Moabites, and Phoenicians may be based on ethnics, languages, or local provenance. The designation for one important “group” – the “Phoenicians” – is coined by the Greeks and purely etic. They acted primarily as individual city-states (e.g. Sidon, Tyre). So-called “Phoenicians,” whether defined by language or by provenance, lived along the Levantine coast, but their diaspora and cultural impact extended to Asia Minor, Egypt (Hdt. 2.112), Greece (Hdt. 8.85), Arabia, north Africa (e.g. Carthage, Hdt. 3.19; Libya, Hdt. 2.32), and southern Europe (Akkermans and Schwartz 2003: pp. 386–387).

Competitors and Allies

The Persian expansion menaced Egyptian, Greek, and Cypriote interests in the Levant. So, almost each Persian king had to deal with them – usually with Phoenician support. Cambyses II fought an alliance of Egypt and Samos (Kuhrt 2010: pp. 104–106; Grabbe 2004: pp. 267–268). Xerxes put down revolts in Egypt, and campaigned against Greece (Grabbe 2004: pp. 290–291; Briant 2002: pp. 197, 489). Artaxerxes I confronted revolts in Egypt supported by Athens. The Persian general Megabyzus suppressed the revolt, but later, as a satrap of Trans-Euphrates, he rebelled against the Persian king (according to Ctesias, but see Grabbe 2004: p. 291). Under Artaxerxes II

Egypt revolted anew, and the Greek cities were troublesome. When Evagoras of Salamis (410–374 BCE) expanded his rule to the Levantine coast, Tyre, the Arabs, and Egypt supported him. After these events, Egypt, supported by Sparta and Athens, once more started war. Pharaoh Tachos set camp in Phoenicia (359 BCE), and sent his nephew Nectanebo (II) to lay siege to Syrian cities; but a coup allowed Nectanebo to seize power in Egypt and he returned (Kuhrt 2010: pp. 349–352; Grabbe 2004: pp. 322–323; Briant 2002: p. 994; Eph'al 1988: pp. 145–146).

When Artaxerxes' III first attempts to recapture Egypt failed (c. 351 BCE), upheavals broke out along the Levantine coast. Isocrates – in a letter to Philipp of Macedonia (347 BCE) – hyped these riots into a major revolt in which the Persian king had lost all the ships of Cyprus, Phoenicia, and Cilicia. But the revolt in Sidon was brutally suppressed. With the Levant pacified, Artaxerxes III marched against Egypt (343–342 BCE).

The Levant in the Satrapy “Trans-Euphrates”

When the Persians took over the Neo-Babylonian Empire, the Levant became part of the satrapy “Trans-Euphrates” (from the Akkadian *ebir nāri*, “Beyond-the-River”). Further designations for (parts of) the region were Old Persian *Aθuriya* and Elamite *Aš-šu-ra-ap* “Assyria”; the classical sources speak of “Syria,” “Coele-Syria,” or “Syria and Phoenicia” (Eph'al 1988: pp. 139–140).

At first (535–486 BCE), one satrap (^{lú}*pīhātu*/*bēl pīhāti*) controlled “Babylonia and Beyond the River.” Toward the end of Darius' reign, Babylonia and Trans-Euphrates were split into two satrapies (Briant 2002: pp. 487–490; Heltzer 1992; Eph'al 1988: pp. 153–156). Looking from Greece eastward, Herodotus counted Trans-Euphrates as the fifth satrapy; it extended from the Cilician/Syrian border to the borders of Egypt; it included Phoenicia, Palestine, and Cyprus, but no Arabian territories. Its tribute amounted to 350 talents (Hdt. 3.91; Kuhrt 2010: p. 674; Rainey 2001).

After the revolt of Sidon, Artaxerxes III put Mazday, satrap of Cilicia, in charge of Trans-Euphrates. Sidon and Samaria minted coins with his name (Elayi 2006: pp. 20–21).

It is not clear whether the satraps of Trans-Euphrates had only one main residence or several at a time, and whether these were the same over the whole time of Persian rule. Based on different sources and arguments, Sidon, Damascus, Aleppo, and Tripolis are among the candidates (Graf 1993: pp. 153–154; Elayi 1991: pp. 82–83).

Little is known about how the Persian Empire administered the various Levantine regions. Most administration was left to the local rulers and their

elites, controlled by Persian officials and garrisons (as in the Phoenician cities). Accordingly, Persian impact seems rather moderate (Elayi 1991).

In the landlocked regions (e.g. Judah, Samaria) the satrapy was sub-divided into provinces (Aramaic/Hebrew *m'dīnāh*) controlled by a “governor” (west Semitic *peḥāh*) (Eph'al 1988: pp. 158–161).

Cyprus, with its several kingdoms ruled by Phoenician- or Greek-rooted dynasties, was also administered via this satrapy (see Chapter 44 Cyprus and the Mediterranean; Maier 1994: pp. 299–302).

The Phoenician City-States

The Phoenician city-states enjoyed some autonomy as long as they were loyal and provided what the empire needed: (i) experience in shipbuilding and seafaring, fundamental for Persian control of the eastern Mediterranean; (ii) access to the Mediterranean network with colonies and trade posts. Their strategic importance in war and trade attracted the interest of all ambitious powers. But their network and diaspora were too volatile to control without their consent (Briant 2002: pp. 489–506; Maier 1994: pp. 317–326; Eph'al 1988: pp. 156–157).

Phoenician territories were scattered along the coast. The Persian king entrusted Ešmunazer II of Sidon with the cities of Dor and Joppe, and the plain of Sharon with its wheat, in the south of Tyre. Further south, Ashkelon and part of the Philistine coast were again under Tyre. Arwad controlled the regions along the northern part of the coast up to Simyra (Tsirkin 2007: p. 120; Maier 1994: p. 321).

The Persians privileged and strengthened Sidon against its regional neighbors and as a beachhead against Greece and Egypt. Probably already under Cambyses II, Ešmunazer II of Sidon performed great deeds that earned him new territories (Kuhrt 2010: pp. 663–665; cf. Jacobs 2006: p. 142; Stucky 2005: pp. 23–24; different Katzenstein 1989: p. 76). The inscription on his sarcophagus acknowledges control of the “Lord of the Kings” (i.e. the Persian king); but Ešmunazer demonstrates independence, choosing an Egyptian sarcophagus type, Phoenician script, and lauding his deeds and his ancestors (Kuhrt 2010: pp. 663–665; Briant 2002: pp. 489–490).

The privileges ended when Tennes of Sidon revolted, allegedly because of arrogant behavior of the Persian satrap. Persian facilities such as the royal park and the fodder stores were attacked, the satrap arrested. Tennes instigated other cities and sought support of pharaoh Nectanebo. Sidon's wealth allowed fast preparations to be made for war (Diod. Sic. 16.40–42; Kuhrt 2010: p. 409; Grabbe 2004: pp. 346–349; Briant 2002: pp. 682–685; Eph'al 1988: pp. 145–146).

But Artaxerxes III acted as was to be expected: He summoned an army and marched against the rebels. The governors Belesys of Syria and Mazday of

Cilicia supported him, but Tennes, who was backed by Greek mercenaries sent by the Egyptian king, beat them. However, when he realized the size of the Persian army approaching, he arranged to hand over Sidon to the Persians and to help against Egypt. Nevertheless, Artaxerxes III set an example: He had leading Sidonians executed and the city burned down, resulting in about 40 000 peoples dying. Sidon was famed to be so rich that the Persian king sold claims to dig up melted gold and silver. Other cities surrendered (Diod. Sic. 16.42–45; Kuhrt 2010: pp. 409–411). By October 345 BCE, Sidonian prisoners of war arrived in Babylon and Susa (ABC 9, 114; Kuhrt 2010: pp. 412–413; Grayson 1975: p. 114). Afterward, Straton II ruled in Sidon (coins from 342 to 341 BCE), remaining loyal to the Persian king until his death in the battle of Issos (333 BCE) (Briant 2002: p. 713).

Although the Persians' preferential treatment of Sidon placed the other Phoenician cities in a subordinate role, they were active, too. Tyre was the mother city of Carthage and key to accessing the respective network (Elayi 1981). The Tyrians volunteered to support Cambyses II against Egypt, and were spared of force and a campaign against Carthage (Hdt. 3.19; Kuhrt 2010: p. 112). Then again, Tyre supported Evagoras of Salamis when he expanded his rule to the Levantine coast. But when Alexander came, Tyre was the city offering most resistance (Diod. Sic. 17.40.2–3, 46.3–4; Kuhrt 2010: pp. 440–441). Maybe, after the ravage of Sidon, they had stepped up in the favors of the Persian king.

From the third millennium Byblos had been Egypt's most important Levantine partner, but it had lost some prominence since the Neo-Assyrian period. As trade and politics concentrated in Sidon and Tyre, Egypt, too, preferred them as main contacts. Byblos gained new importance as a religious center. By the end of the Persian period it had invested in naval power, taking part in Persian action (Elayi 2008: pp. 100–114).

Close by the sea, wealthy Gaza was a starting point of the desert roads to Egypt (see Chapter 39 Egypt and Chapter 38 The Arabian World). It seems to have been under direct Persian control as no local rulers are known (Katzenstein 1989: pp. 68–70). Gaza had supported the rebellions of Amyrtaeus of Egypt (410 BCE) and of Evagoras of Cyprus (382 BCE), but by the end of Artaxerxes III's Egyptian campaign the region was back under Persian control (Grabbe 2004: pp. 346–349). It resisted Alexander until the end (332/331 BCE, Arr. Anab. 2.25–26).

The Landlocked Provinces

Information on the landlocked provinces is scarce as they were beyond the area of interest of the classical and, to a great extent, the biblical sources. The hinterland was more rural, with some important centers along the main roads that connected the coast and Arabia to the core of the Persian Empire.

An important crossroad was the region in northwestern Syria, where the Euphrates comes closest to the Mediterranean. The palace and paradeisos of the “Syrian” satrap Belesys were situated near the source of the Dardas (mod. Nahr el-Dahab?; Xen. Anab. 1.4.10; Kuhrt 2010: pp. 615–616). The queen mother Paryatis had villages near Aleppo (Xen. Anab. 1.4.9; Kuhrt 2010: p. 821). Another paradeisos was situated at Triparadeisos near the sources of the Orontes; some major buildings were excavated in Tall Mardikh (Briant 2002: p. 1030; Graf 1993: pp. 152–154).

Strabon (XVI 2.20) described Damascus as “the most famous of the cities in that part of the world in the time of the Persian empire” (Eph’al 1988: p. 154). Under Darius I, a pīhātu of Trans-Euphrates is located there. The “prefect” of the city wanted to hand over to Alexander property and money of the Persian king (Curt. 3.12–13; Kuhrt 2010: p. 438).

Some cities of Palestine and Trans-Jordan were strengthened, probably as a buffer against Egypt and Arabia. Aramaic legal papyri found in a cave near Wadi ed-Daliyeh date from Artaxerxes II to Artaxerxes IV/Darius III. Here, the toponym Samaria designates the qryt “city,” the byrt’ “citadel,” and the medinah “province.” A peha “governor,” assisted by a sangu “prefect,” controlled it. Most of the documents are deeds of slave sales and pledges, sometimes witnessed by a governor. The coins issued in Samaria and the sealings assumed to come from Wadi ed-Daliyeh show usually Persian motives but also Greek imagery, partly mediated via Phoenicia (Grabbe 2004: pp. 30–31, 55–58; Briant 2002: pp. 713–716).

The Persian Empire was certainly an important period for the (re-) formation of Judah/Jerusalem. But the small province, rural with small towns and villages, played no important role. Jerusalem was the only large settlement. Inscriptions on some Yehud sealings give the names of several pehā “governors” (Grabbe 2004: pp. 22–34; Briant 2002: pp. 487–488, 504).

Cyrus sanctioned the return of the Jews to Palestine and their rebuilding work in Jerusalem (Ezra 6.2–5; Kuhrt 2010: pp. 84–85). Accordingly, Judah welcomed his rule (Isaiah 41; Kuhrt 2010: pp. 82–84), though it is unclear whether it had already become a Persian province (Grabbe 2004: pp. 265–267; Briant 2002: pp. 45–48; Eph’al 1988: p. 142). Allegedly, the temple of Jerusalem was completed under Darius (but see Grabbe 2004: pp. 282–285; Eph’al 1988: p. 143).

Under Darius II a letter on a papyrus from Elephantine (Egypt) was addressed to Bagohi, governor of Judah: Egyptians had attacked the Yahu temple of the local Jewish community. But pleas for support sent to the Great King, to priests of Jerusalem, and to notables of Judah had remained unanswered (Kuhrt 2010: pp. 856–859; Grabbe 2004: pp. 291–292).

During Artaxerxes III’s conflicts with Egypt all seems to have remained steady in Judah and Samaria (Grabbe 2004: pp. 346–349).

Some of the Aramaic ostraca from the region of ancient Idumea (late fifth and fourth centuries BCE) were excavated (e.g. Beersheba, Tell Arad), but most are without provenance. They include lists of supplies (orders or receipts) of wheat, barley, flour, wine, oil, olives, straw, wood. Unfortunately, it is not clear what administrative units (way stations, post, military, taxes?) issued them (Grabbe 2004: pp. 58–60; Briant 2002: pp. 716–718).

Trade and Products

Various partners were important in Levantine economic life: traditional ones such as Egypt (e.g. in royal burials or sarcophagi), new ones such as the Greeks (e.g. luxury products and painted pottery; see Chapter 18 Syria), and of course the Persian Empire, which generated the biggest consumption and demand.

Apart from ships and maritime force we know little of what the Levant contributed to the Persian Empire. Before the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus, several products reached Mesopotamia via/from the Levant: copper (Yamana/Cyprus?), iron (Lebanon), alum and “Egyptian blue” (Egypt). Other Levantine exports were textiles, honey, wine, and spices. In Persian time Egypt imported wine, metals, and wood from Phoenicia (Briant 2002: pp. 386–387). A document from the time of Darius registers the tithe in purple wools of a governor of Byblos (name debated; Dandamayev 1995).

Sidon prospered, being the Persians’ favorite beachhead to the Mediterranean. Athens issued an honorary decree (360 BCE) for Straton of Sidon for his taking good care of the Athenian envoy to the Great King; it came with tax exemptions for Sidonians. A competition in the luxuries of their tables was held between Straton of Sidon and Nikokles of Paphos (Briant 2002: p. 202).

The Phoenicians were middlemen in the frankincense and casia trade between Arabia and Hellas (Hdt. 3.107; 111). Gaza was another important trade knot in the trade from south Arabia. In return, among others, women were traded to Arabia (Katzenstein 1989: pp. 77–80).

The Persian satraps, the Phoenician cities, but also Gaza, Ashdod, Judah, and Samaria minted their own coins. This was a sign of autonomy, a privilege granted by the Persian king, but foremost a modern economic asset needed in the trade with the Greek world (Elayi 2008: p. 111; Eph’al 1998: pp. 111–113, 1988: pp. 156–158).

The Levantine Contributions to the Persian Army

The Phoenicians were the main suppliers to Persian maritime power. Under Cambyses II a Tyrian fleet volunteered to support the campaign against Egypt (Hdt. 3.19; Kuhrt 2010: p. 112).

To gather intelligence, Darius ordered an expedition of Persian notables on three ships (two warships, one merchantman) starting from Sidon to chart the Greek coasts. The mission reached Tarentum (Italy), where they were arrested as spies and held captive (Hdt. 3.135–138). Phoenician ships supported Darius against Salamis during the Ionian revolt (Hdt. 5.108).

With 300 vessels, Syria, Palestine, and Phoenicia furnished the highest quota to Xerxes' naval force (Hdt. 7.89; Kuhrt 2010: p. 525). Xerxes had a preference for Phoenician ships (Hdt. 8.118). In Salamis many ships were lost in battle (Hdt. 8.85). They were also used to form floating bridges (Hdt. 8.97). Phoenician ships, especially the Sidonian, were prominent in Xerxes' reviews of troops from all the lands of the empire, by which he demonstrated the vastness of the Persian Empire (Briant 2002: pp. 196–198). In Abydos (before crossing the Hellespont), the "Phoenicians from Sidon" won a boat race (Hdt. 7.44). In Doriskos (Thrace), Xerxes paced the land troops in a chariot, boarded a Sidonian vessel, and, under a golden tent, surveyed the ships of all nations (Hdt. 7.100). Before the naval battle of Salamis, Xerxes asked the opinions of kings of Sidon and Tyre (Hdt. 7.98), valuing their maritime experience. The Sidonian king commanded all the Phoenician vessels (Diod. Sic. 14.79.8; Kuhrt 2010: p. 371), but it was always a Persian holding overall command of the fleet (Briant 2002: pp. 197, 489–490).

After raids by Spartans and others in his provinces, the satrap Pharnabazus convinced Artaxerxes II to build a better navy. Conon, an Athenian exile, was given the task and appointed Persian admiral. Cypriot princes built the warships. Phoenician ports were fitted with a fleet, partly under order of the prince of Sidon. The Syracusan Herodas observed the building of the fleet and reported it to the Spartans (Xen. Hell. 3.4.1; Kuhrt 2010: p. 370). Sparta asked Egypt for support, but the shipment was intercepted in Rhodes (Diod. Sic. 14.79.4–8; Kuhrt 2010: pp. 370–371). The new Achaemenid fleet scared Sparta and other Greek cities into peace negotiations, isolating Egypt.

Being part of the Persian Empire had also demographic impact on the Levant. In the battle of Salamis, about 75% of the Persian fleet was destroyed. Tsirkin (2007: pp. 114–115) estimates that about 60 000 men manned the Phoenician fleet, suffering proportional losses.

Change of Rule

The various Levantine regions reacted differently to Alexander's advance against Darius III, reflecting their personal anticipation of their position under Macedonian rule. Differences arose not only between regions but between rulers, families, elites, and people. When the Persian governor of Damascus wanted to surrender the treasures of the Persian king to Alexander (333/332 BCE), he was killed by one of his own men and his head was sent to Darius (Curt. 3.12.27–13.4, 13.17; Kuhrt 2010: pp. 438–439).

Alexander appointed Menon, son of Cerdimmas, as satrap of Coele Syria and gave him cavalry to defend the land (332 BCE). In Phoenicia, Straton crowned Alexander with a gold crown and handed him over Arwad and other cities, while his father, Gerostratus, the king of Arwad and surroundings, was at sea with other Phoenician and Cypriot rulers supporting the Persian general Autophradates. Byblos and Sidon surrendered, the latter because “they detested the Persians” (Arr. Anab. 2.13.7–8; Kuhrt 2010: p. 439). Then, Gerostratus of Arwad and Enylis of Byblos left Autophradates and with about 80 ships defected to Alexander; others (e.g. Rhodes, Lycia, Cyprus) followed (Arr. Anab. 2.20.1–3; Kuhrt 2010: pp. 442–443).

The city of Tyre, too, surrendered, while its king was at sea. Although Alexander had initially been allowed to enter the city and to sacrifice there to Heracles (Arr. Anab. 2.15.6; Kuhrt 2010: pp. 439–440), the Tyrians changed their minds and forced him to besiege them. They trusted in the strength of their island city, and in the support from Carthago and Darius (Diod. Sic. 17.40.2–3, 46.3–4; Kuhrt 2010: pp. 440–441).

On the way to Egypt Alexander took resistant Gaza. While in Egypt, the people of Samaria burned alive Andromachus, whom Alexander had put in charge of Syria (331 BCE). He appointed a new governor and punished the perpetrators (Curt. 4.8.9–11; Kuhrt 2010: p. 445).

The cities embracing the new “Great King” Alexander certainly hoped for improvement. It is understandable that Sidon changed partner after its harsh treatment by Artaxerxes III. But Tyre, which once had supported Cyprus and Egypt against the Persians, fought hard to stay independent from Alexander. Maybe, after Sidon’s fall from grace, and being the mother city and partner of Carthage, it wanted to keep its position as an independent broker between Carthage, the Mediterranean network, and the vast but navy-less Persian Empire. Being the main provider of naval power and experience was an asset to the otherwise landlocked Persian Empire, and leverage to maintain some independence. But in Alexander’s empire there was plenty of maritime experience available, and for centuries Ionian cities had been the competitors of the Phoenicians. Consequently, the Phoenician fleet was put under direct Macedonian and Greek control. Generally, there was no improvement when Alexander took over: rebellious cities were treated as harshly as before, taxes and obligations were heavier, minting was controlled and restricted, and dynastic succession was not guaranteed as rulers were replaced if they were not in line with Alexander’s interests (Verkinderen 1987: pp. 295–308).

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CHAPTER 43

Asia Minor

Elsbeth R.M. Dusingberre

Croesus of Lydia, last of the Mermnad monarchs, was defeated by Cyrus the Great in the 540s BCE when Cyrus took Sardis and most of the terrain commanded from that city, extending from the Halys River in the east to the Aegean coast in the west (Hdt. 1.86, Nic. Dam. FGrH 90 F8, Lecoq 1997: pp. 181–183). This historical event is reflected in the archeological record at Sardis by a destruction level: it is one of the rare examples of an archeological horizon clearly to be linked to an event described in historical sources (Cahill 2002, 2010). Sardis became the administrative center of the new satrapy of Sparda, a logical choice for capital because of its commanding and defensible situation. The long history of governing from that city probably also meant that various parts of the apparatus for governing an imperial province – scribes, storehouses, barracks, accommodations for leaders – were already in place. The Greek cities of the Ionian seaboard tried to negotiate with Cyrus after the fall of Sardis; when he rejected these overtures, they asked Sparta for help (Hdt. 1.141–153). Sparta sent a rather feeble warning to Cyrus, who set off again for Mesopotamia to conquer Babylon (Lecoq 1997: pp. 182–183; Briant 1996: pp. 44–55, 75–80) (Figure 43.1).

The primary concerns of the king in appointing satraps at Sardis were to bind the region to himself, to balance the power of other western Anatolian satraps, and to fend off foreign invasions. Sardis was wealthy, fortified, distant from Persia, and close to Greece. There was no reflection at Sardis of the hereditary dynasty at Dascylium or that of the Hecatomnids in Caria.



Figure 43.1 Map of Achaemenid Anatolia (author's drawing).

The first satrap, left behind by Cyrus, was a Persian man named Tabalus (Hdt. 1.153). He directed an administration that apparently included many local people; the Lydian Pactyes was “in charge of the gold of Croesus and the other Lydians.” After an abortive uprising led by Pactyes, however, Cyrus took reprisals against those who had aided him and appointed another Persian, Oroetes, as satrap (Hdt. 1.154–157, 3.120–127). Oroetes killed Polycrates, Greek tyrant of Samos, and perhaps added Samos to Achaemenid territory. Around 522 BCE, Oroetes moved against the Cappadocians to the east. He also had the Persian Mitrobates, satrap of Dascylium, and his son, Cranaspes, killed. These exploits made Oroetes the most powerful man in western Anatolia.

Darius took the throne in 521 BCE and, according to Herodotus, directly afterward had Oroetes removed from his position. The king secured the area by appointing his brother satrap at Sardis; Artaphernes defended the walled acropolis at Sardis from the ravages of the Ionian Revolt (499–494 BCE) led by the Milesians. The lack of cooperation between the Ionians and the superior military power of the Achaemenid forces led, after several years of fighting, to the successful suppression of the revolt, although not before it involved Caria and Cyprus as well as Ionia (Hdt. 5, 6; Thuc. 3.65, 82; Balcer 1984: p. 227). The Persepolis Fortification tablets document the journey from Sardis to Persepolis of one Datis in 494 BCE; this was probably Datis the Mede, who later commanded the Persian expedition at Marathon, perhaps bringing to the king at Persepolis an account of the successfully quelled rebellion (PFT Q 1809; see Lewis 1980). Thus the first 50 years of Persian rule in Asia Minor were defined by the desire for territorial control: the Lydians attempted to regain control of their old capital; the satraps sought to take control of larger tracts of land; the Ionian city-states fought to acquire control over the seaboard and hinterlands.

Artaphernes’ measures in assessing taxes and military obligations in 493 BCE included a careful survey of land (Hdt. 6.42–43). They stayed in effect through the entire fifth century BCE and may have been the basis for the tribute exacted by the Athenians from those Ionian city-states that joined the Delian League (Balcer 1984: pp. 204–205). That the military obligations established by Artaphernes were honored may be seen in the lists of peoples in the Achaemenid army that invaded Greece (Hdt. 7.60).

The earliest Achaemenid archeological deposits at Sardis date to the end of the sixth century BCE (Dusinberre 2013). They include quantities of the cup called the Achaemenid bowl, a shape that held particular significance at Persepolis in the authority-charged visual renditions of the Apadana reliefs. Significantly, the Achaemenid bowl has no precedent in Anatolia before the Persians arrived. Silver, glass, and ceramic Achaemenid bowls were popular almost everywhere in Achaemenid Anatolia. What is interesting is the



Figure 43.2 Ceramic Achaemenid bowls from Sardis. Source: Reproduced by permission of the Archeological Exploration of Sardis/Harvard University.

tremendous standardization of the vessel in shape and quality. Because it is impossible to hold or use these vessels as one would a cup with handles and a foot, using them demanded different drinking behaviors. This new shape required a new hold and style of drinking. Thus, down to the very lowest levels of society, even where people were continuing to use traditional shapes and behaviors at the same time, new behaviors infiltrated too. People across Anatolia engaged in drinking practices that united them to the new imperial authority (Figure 43.2).

Royal intervention at Sardis was great. Both Darius and Xerxes used the city as a base for their forces before and during combat with Greeks in 490 and 480 BCE, a time when Artaphernes' son, Xerxes' cousin Artaphernes II, was confirmed as satrap (Hdt. 6.7). Xerxes spent the winter of 479 BCE at Sardis and may have enhanced its great fortification wall while there (Hdt. 8.116, 9.108–109; Cahill 2010).

Imperial authority was famously asserted in Anatolia during Xerxes' progress through the land around 480 BCE, on his way to Greece. His reminders of kingly hegemony were established across the peninsula and showed remarkable diversity of approach and statement. I mention five here (Dusinberre 2013):

- 1) Xerxes' inscription at Van, in Babylonian, Elamite, and Old Persian, overtly extends kingly reach into the mountains and valleys of Anatolia. The inscription's use *only* of Mesopotamian and Persian languages makes a strong statement about that reach: This is a foreign overlord who now exerts authority over the ancient lands of Urartu. By mentioning Ahuramazda and Darius, Xerxes affirms his connection to his father's religion and his own rightful rule. Expanding on the language of Darius' inscriptions at Persepolis, Xerxes begs the god's protection for his entire empire and the effects of his deeds: it is a highly visible and powerful royal declaration of empire and authority (see also Jacobs 2012b).

- 2) Entering Lydia, Xerxes was so struck by the beauty of a plane tree that he adorned it with gold and established a permanent caretaker for it. This made a strong statement of wealth and power to the ancient local populace, one that had tremendous impact on the imagination of generations.
- 3) Xerxes also marked his passage by leaving his name on significant gifts. Offering as gifts the paraphernalia of banqueting, marked with the royal name, certainly formed part of his interaction with local elites. An example is the alabaster alabastron found at Halicarnassus that bears the inscription “Xerxes, the great king” in Old Persian, Elamite, Babylonian, and Egyptian.
- 4) Two seals represented by impressions on the Dascylium bullae bear the name of Xerxes, written in Old Persian. It is significant that royal name seals, with their powerful connections to Persian royal court protocol and expression, turn up at the Anatolian satrapal headquarters farthest from Fars. The royal name seals at Persepolis were used not by the king but by important imperial administrative offices or officials; the royal name seals at Dascylium functioned as part of the network binding satrapal and other centers to the imperial administration.
- 5) Xerxes founded a citadel and palace at Celaenae, augmented perhaps later with a paradeisos or royal garden, on his way back to Persia. These were assertive statements of continued imperial power, as well as being practical edifices at the headwaters of the Marsyas River. After the defeat by the Greeks, securing this passageway from the Aegean to the Anatolian interior might well have seemed necessary. The situation of the buildings was also appropriate as a reminder of kingly presence for local elites, however.

Xerxes thus drew on a great array of expressions to imprint his authority on the people of Anatolia. These served as permanent reminders of Achaemenid hegemony even after his vast army had departed from Anatolia.

In 479/8 BCE the Samians led a second Ionian revolt that achieved Samian independence from Achaemenid (but not Athenian) tribute. Significantly, the important port city of Miletus was not a member of the uprising. The fact that the Lydians did not join the Ionians in either revolt demonstrates the degree to which they had been assimilated into Achaemenid hegemony.

Living in Asia Minor under Persian rule included folding the local elite into the new regime. It is not clear how the Achaemenid administration first brought about the remarkable cohesion of the elite, but the consistency of manner in which people demonstrated their membership in the polyethnic elite of Achaemenid Anatolia – the consistency of portable elite culture – is striking (Dusinberre 2013; against the notion that Achaemenid ideology was

signaled visually, see Jacobs 2012a). The elite signaled their status in a great variety of ways: their clothing, their drinking and dining behaviors and apparatus, the imagery and style of their personal sealstones, the size and kind of mortuary structures they constructed and the nature of their mortuary inclusions, their adoption of Persianizing equipment such as horse trappings and behaviors like public greetings, the gifts they exchanged to cement relations among one another, even architectural power statements. The meaning and significance of these behaviors led to great continuity across Anatolia.

Indeed, it seems when a man or woman was signaling membership in the Achaemenid elite, this was the primary identity that mattered, rather than ethnicity or some other aspect of identity (Dusinger 2013). Within the rubric of “elite identity” was room to signal individual preferences and identity as well. Naming patterns demonstrate this. Several sealstones were carved with Achaemenid hegemonic iconography and inscribed in Lydian with Lydian names claiming ownership. Others were carved with a similar collection of images linking their users to Achaemenid authority and in styles situated, it seems, in Anatolia; but they were inscribed in Old Persian cuneiform naming the kings Xerxes and Artaxerxes, in Aramaic with Persian names, or in Aramaic with names of another ethnicity altogether. Thus these individuals signaled membership in the elite via an Achaemenid iconographic system of visual authority, but they differentiated themselves within that category by the languages deployed on their sealstones and the ethnic backgrounds of their own names or those of the kings to whom they proclaimed allegiance.

Ethnic identity clearly mattered at times, however. Imperial texts and reliefs accentuate notions of ethnicity as distinctive indicators of identity, within a framework of universal empire: Like the United States motto, Achaemenid ideology emphasizes a sense of *e pluribus unum*. The imperial ideology emphasizes the unity of many rather than any notion of ethnic identities in isolation. Thus the Apadana presents instances in which gifts visually mute idiosyncrasy and create imperial cohesion (Root 2007). In this context, it can be seen as a demonstration of imperial strength, as well as regional autonomy, for different peoples of the realm to speak different languages and continue differing social customs.

In some instances, ethnic Persians themselves may have formed the elite. Nick Sekunda has argued that three large landowning families in Hellespontine Phrygia were ethnically Persian and suggested that analogous social structures were to be found elsewhere in western Anatolia as well (Sekunda 1988). Although some evidence, such as the Sacrilege Inscription from Ephesus, demonstrates that names of a given ethnic background need not indicate that same ethnicity on the part of their holders (Hanfmann 1987), Sekunda’s is a plausible scenario given what we know of landholding in Persia and of imperial colonization and consolidation in general. Historical texts provide clear

evidence that Persians also employed local elite leaders to govern and control regions of Asia Minor, however, including Pythius of Lydia in the mid-sixth century BCE and Zenis and Mania in the Troad late in the fifth century BCE (Hdt. 7.28; Xen. Hell. 3.1.10–15). Indeed, the very mix of ethnicities in the names of the Sacrilege Inscription demonstrates a mingling of ideas and sharing of cultural aspects across ethnicity in Asia Minor.

The problematic Peace of Callias, a treaty which may or may not have been signed after the Battle of the Eurymedon River in either 469 or 466 BCE, purports to have given autonomy to the Ionian city-states on the Aegean coast – but it is unclear whether it in fact ever existed (see, e.g., Bosworth 1990). If so, it reduced the responsibilities of the satrap of Lydia for some decades at least. Following Artaphernes II, sometime after 450 BCE, another member of the royal family was satrap at Sardis: Pissouthnes, possibly grandson of Darius I and son of Hystaspes II, who assisted the Samians when they revolted against Athens in 440 BCE (Thuc. 4.115–117; Balcer 1984: p. 168, 176). He was replaced during the turbulent years of Darius II by a man named Tissaphernes, perhaps a distant relative (Kuhrt 2007: p. 339). Tissaphernes is portrayed by Thucydides as a cheater, a liar, one who could not be trusted. If viewed from his own side, however, he may be seen as a brilliant diplomat who kept the Greeks at each other's throats and in 412/11 BCE led them to sign a treaty that granted back to the king all the land in Asia Minor that had been his – effectively undoing the depredations of the Ionian uprisings and all the uncertainties in the years around them.

Ironically, the resolution of conflict between Greeks and the Achaemenid Empire in western Anatolia allowed the satrap of Sardis to turn his attentions inward, toward power in the empire itself. In 407 BCE, Darius II appointed his younger son, Cyrus, to be satrap of Lydia, Greater Phrygia, and Cappadocia (an enormous area) and relegated Tissaphernes to Caria and Ionia (Briant 1996: pp. 608–629). This act afforded great power and wealth to one of Darius's sons even as it removed him from central imperial oversight and authority. The nomination of Cyrus the Younger to this position coincided with the arrival in Sardis of a particularly active and charismatic Spartan nauarch, Lysander. The two became allies, and in 406 BCE Lysander was able to reinforce his navy with ships and men, thanks to the resources Cyrus made available to him. In 404 BCE, his father died and his Spartan allies won a decisive victory over the Athenians at Aegospotami. It was just after this that Cyrus used his satrapal headquarters as a base to launch a revolt against his brother, the new king.

Cyrus' preparations were stealthy. He sponsored exiles in various cities and wooed people coming from court; when Sparta offered ambivalent support, he recruited mercenaries in cities of European Greece rather than Anatolia (Kuhrt 2007: pp. 356–358). He claimed to the Greek mercenaries in his

service that he was amassing his troops to lead against Tissaphernes in Pisidia (Xen. Anab. 1.1–2; Plut. Artax.; cf. Diod. Sic. 14.11; Nep. Alc. 9; Plut. Alc. 37–39). In 401 BCE, he led the same troops to Babylonia instead in an effort to overthrow his brother, Artaxerxes II, king since 404 BCE (Briant 1996: pp. 633–637). He was decisively defeated at the battle of Cunaxa in 401 BCE.

It is not clear to what extent Cyrus' rebellion was supported by other Persians in Anatolia. Greek sources by and large claim the satraps of Anatolia and the Persian elite in general were loyal to Cyrus and in direct or implied opposition to Artaxerxes II (Xen. Anab. 1.8.9, 2.1, 3.2; Xen. Oec. 4; Ctes. FGrH F8; Diod. Sic. 14.19, 24; 2.5; Arr. Anab. 2; Plut. Artax. 11). But some of the satraps along the way blocked the passage of the army, and many other members of the elite clearly did not support his endeavor (Xen. Anab. 1.14; Diod. Sic. 14.20; Briant 1996: pp. 643–644).

Tissaphernes, who had traveled in person to warn the king of Cyrus' approaching army, was reinstated in his previous position, perhaps even with expanded territories under his control (Xen. Hell. 3.1, 14.1; Diod. Sic. 14.35, 80; Polyae. 7.11; Hell. Oxy. 14). His first acts at the beginning of the fourth century BCE make it clear that he wished to govern with overt allegiance to the central imperial authority; thus when the Ionian cities refused to pay tribute, he ravaged the territory of Cyme and besieged the city (Xen. Hell. 3.1; Diod. Sic. 14.27). The spring of 399 BCE saw the renewal of hostilities between Greeks and the Achaemenid troops in western Anatolia.

The Greeks first described the ensuing war as simply against Tissaphernes, and the Spartan general Thibron moved against the satrap's main military bases at Magnesia and Tralles (Diod. Sic. 14.36). His successor in 398 BCE, Dercyllidas, however, made a truce with Tissaphernes in order that the Spartans might wage war against Pharnabazus, satrap at Dascylium; he freed various Ionian city-states from Achaemenid hegemony and put down some Chian exiles who had been launching raids against the Ionians (Xen. Anab. 7.6, 7; Xen. Hell. 3.1, 2). Meanwhile, Artaxerxes II made Pharnabazus subordinate to Tissaphernes, to whom he granted full military power in the west. Tissaphernes overcame the Spartan army thanks to his large cavalry. The Spartans refused to sign a truce that banned both Spartans and their army from Anatolia, but withdrew for the time being. The summer of 397 BCE saw major rearmament on the part of Artaxerxes, who began building a formidable navy. Tissaphernes was defeated by the Spartan king Agesilaus outside Sardis in 395 BCE and was replaced as satrap by Tithraustes, who won a series of military victories on land. Pharnabazus, satrap at Dascylium, led the new navy to a decisive Achaemenid victory at Cnidus in 394 BCE (Xen. Hell. 3.4; Hell. Oxy. 19; Diod. Sic. 14.35, 80). This series of events reestablished Achaemenid power in Ionia.

Tithraustes was recalled by the king and replaced with an old friend and adviser, Tiribazus, who was granted the satrapy and some form of overarching

military command (Xen. Hell. 4.8; Xen. Anab. 4.4; Diod. Sic. 14.85; Plut. Artax. 7). With Tiribazus, the Spartan king Antalcidas finally agreed to a peace treaty: The Spartans would withdraw from Anatolia, and all the Greek cities of the Anatolian mainland would pay tribute to the Achaemenid Empire, leaving the islands and European Greece autonomous and free of tribute obligations. Although the king initially rejected the treaty, three years later, in 386 BCE, he agreed to it (Xen. Hell. 5.1). This edict was reaffirmed twice, on the initiative of the king: once in 375 BCE and again in 371 BCE.

Artaxerxes the King thinks it just that the cities of Asia shall be his and of the islands Clazomenae and Cyprus, and that the other cities, small and great, shall be autonomous except Lemnus, Imbrus, and Scyrus; these shall be Athenian as before. Whichever side does not accept this peace, I shall make war on them along with whoever wishes, by land and by sea, with ships and with wealth.

Tiribazus was confirmed in his command at Sardis, while Pharnabazus was wedded to one of the king's daughters. The satrapies of western Anatolia were thus linked firmly to the king in Persia.

Asia Minor had but short respite from combat, however: the "satraps' revolt" broke out in 361 BCE, and it had surely been brewing for several years before its eruption (Diod. Sic. 15.90; Briant 1996: pp. 675–694). Epigraphic and numismatic evidence from Anatolia and Egypt demonstrates that this so-called revolt probably consisted of a series of local uprisings rather than a concerted and unified effort (Weiskopf 1989; Debord 1999). At any rate, the revolts were all put down, the satraps replaced.

No surviving records detail happenings in Lydia in the next few decades (for a careful analysis of the administration and officials, see Jacobs 1994: pp. 103–104). At the time Alexander arrived, in 335 BCE, Sardis was still fortified: Alexander was reportedly impressed by the triple wall on the acropolis (Arr. Anab. 1.17). But the satrap, Mithrenes, opened the gates without struggle and made over the treasury for Alexander's usage (Arr. Anab. 1.16, 17; Diod. Sic. 17.21). Archeological evidence demonstrates that Sardis' inhabitants continued to thrive into the Hellenistic period. Thus the political history of Achaemenid Sardis, torn with wars and conflict, ends with a decision to surrender that enabled its inhabitants to continue living along much the same lines, exploring intercultural opportunity and personal taste.

It is clear from literary and epigraphic evidence that maintaining political and military control of their regions was one of the most important duties of satraps (Tuplin 1987; Dusi 2013). Thus the Persian Asidates had a large fortified estate in Mysia, peopled with slaves and dependants; the land around it was "populated with military colonists and garrisons and bristl[ing] with small forts" (Briant 2002: p. 643). Aeolis, too, included a network of

small forts, commanded by the military leader of the surrounding areas. Increased population in the Granicus river valley in the fifth and fourth centuries BCE as well as in the Caecus River valley, the lower Hermus, and the Maeander, may have been the result of security concerns, providing a sort of “buffer zone” for the empire. Troops could be called up from a wide area in case of need, as demonstrated by Herodotus’ description (5.102) of the Persians holding land grants west of the Halys river who were mustered when the Ionians burned Sardis in 498 BCE. The presence of troops would have had a profound impact on those living in Asia Minor under Persian rule.

Some archeological evidence exists for military establishments; thus Sardis was protected in the Achaemenid period by multiple rings of walls, of which two have been excavated (Cahill 2010; Dusingberre 2013). At least part of the city extended beyond the fortification walls and was vulnerable to destruction; the lack of extensive Achaemenid-period remains within the city walls may indicate a scattering of the population, with the exception of the garrison housed on the acropolis. That acropolis was heavily fortified. Another satrapal site, Dascylium, was defended by a stronghold and a garrison, and it saw two major phases of construction during the Achaemenid period that added to its defensibility.

Two specifically military sites have been excavated in Anatolia. Meydancikkale was a fortress on a hilltop in western Cilicia (Davesne and Laroche-Traunecker 1998). Achaemenid remains include a massive fortified gate with three towers, a cistern, and magazines. Aramaic inscriptions give the name of the city as KRŠBYRT, “fortress of Kirshu.” Remains of two reliefs recalling the Ionian tribute bearers from Persepolis would have reminded local soldiers of the king to whom they owed their loyalty.

Jutting above the hills of north-central Lydia is the rock outcrop of Şahankaya. Nearby tumuli demonstrate Achaemenid-period occupation in the vicinity, and a slingshot bullet inscribed with the name of Tissaphernes demonstrates military importance for the site by the late fifth or early fourth century BCE. Fortification walls at Şahankaya date to the late Achaemenid period. A fourth-century (?) watchtower dominates the site and provides a view over northern Lydia: “its intervisibility with Sardis and many other points in central and northern Lydia make it a very strategic place” (Roosevelt 2009: p. 121). A square plinth near the top of the outcrop is topped by a rounded protrusion of stone with a shallow basin in its top, probably the base for a signal fire (Dusingberre 2013).

Information on taxes and household structures gives us some additional sense of what it was like to live in Asia Minor under Persian rule (Dusingberre 2013). Thus a recent study compares the Mnesimachus Inscription at Sardis with two Aramaic inscriptions in Lydia and suggests that estates in western Anatolia were centered on large houses perhaps occupied by the estate owners

and their families (Roosevelt 2009: pp. 113–114). The estates included vineyards, gardens and orchards, and fields. Larger estates included outbuildings for laborers (slaves?), as well as livestock and farm equipment, and may have had settlements of tenants who worked estate lands perhaps as sharecroppers. These estates served as residences and work areas for food processing and craft production. Estate owners, like the satraps in turn, garnered revenues in the form of labor, money, agricultural goods, and wine vessels.

Interestingly, neither religious expression nor the use of specific languages, with the possible exception of Aramaic, seem to have been exploited extensively by the central imperial authority as an avenue of imposing power on Anatolia (Dusinberre 2013). Rather, these potentially ideologically charged avenues of communication were granted a great deal of autonomy. Religious expression does not provide a single impression: religious belief and practice were complex and do not neatly fit any one interpretive framework. In a way, they demonstrate the simultaneous flow of authority and autonomy, here practiced perhaps by religious leaders rather than by government officials. It is clear that there were times when local political figures attempted to use religious cult to increase their authority. It is equally clear, however, that the Achaemenid administration did not effect any systematic conversion of cult to reify its own authority. In general, religion seems to have been a way for local populaces to exercise autonomy over a key aspect of their own culture and life systems.

A similar official approach to language seems to have pertained (Dusinberre 2013; cf. Jacobs 2012b). Epigraphic evidence demonstrates that local languages were inscribed through the Achaemenid period. Particularly regional in language use were funerary markers, which often were inscribed in a local language even when little evidence exists for an earlier epigraphic tradition and when significant evidence exists for the simultaneous use of an additional language. The notion that Aramaic served as a koine is perhaps borne out by the presence of Aramaic inscriptions on seals, while a number of bilingual inscriptions suggest that Aramaic had status as a “powerfact” language, linking the inscriber with the might of imperial authority no matter what his ethnicity.

An essential aspect of living in Achaemenid Anatolia concerned minted money (see Dusinberre 2013 for this discussion of coins). Although Lydia and some Greek city-states of Ionia certainly used minted coins earlier, the Achaemenid Empire contributed tremendously to the monetization of Anatolia. Silver and bronze coins circulated widely by the end of the Achaemenid period, with mints in western and southern Anatolia particularly active. Their distribution and the wear they show demonstrate that the less valuable coins, at any rate, entered the public economy and served as a medium for exchange.

The most familiar coins of the Achaemenid Empire are the imperial issues, gold darics and silver sigloi (although Corfù 2010 suggests the archer coins are not Achaemenid at all). These coins bear on the obverse an image of a figure wearing the Persian court robe and dentate crown, carrying a bow and sometimes other weapons. The coins are hence generally designated “archers.” How well Achaemenid coins functioned as recognized signifiers of the Persian king’s might is clear from Greek sources. When the Spartan Agesilaus withdrew from the Troad in 394 BCE, he is said by Plutarch to have claimed he was driven from Asia by the king’s 30,000 archers (Plut. Artax. 20). It is the king’s *gold* archers to which he refers, used by Artaxerxes II to foment revolt in Greece against Sparta.

The earliest type of archer coin minted clearly suggests the idea of a divine figure holding a bow: only the upper half of the figure is portrayed, emerging from a crescent. The format recalls earlier Assyrian portrayals of the god Assur and contemporary Achaemenid images of Ahuramazda(?) on seals and wall reliefs. And yet the crenelated crown worn by the figure links him to representations of the king in an almost symbiotic association. The figure represents an image of divine kingship.

In the fourth century BCE the production of silver sigloi petered out; apparently these coins were increasingly replaced in western Anatolia by what have been considered issues by local satraps. These new coins bear an imperial statement of conflated kingship and divinity, like the other imperial issues, but couched in stylistic terms that would have increased their impact on local audiences (*pace* Jacobs 2012a,b). A case study will serve to make this point: the “tiarate head” coins.

The tiarate head series were silver and bronze coins minted in western Anatolia in the fifth and especially fourth century BCE. They bear on their obverse a bearded head, usually in profile, wearing the so-called tiara, or “Median” headgear, a soft cap with side and back flaps – the headgear a Persian warrior would wear into battle: the heads display a generalizing and idealized stereotyped image. Unlike the archer coins, the tiarate head coins bear a figural reverse instead of a simple incuse punch. Some include on their reverse motifs of particular Greek cities – e.g. the owl of Athens or the kithara of the Chalcidians. But whereas the coins show the motifs of Greek cities, they are inscribed in Greek “of the King.” The imagery, the style of carving, and the language of inscription leave little room for doubt that the intended audience of the coins was Greek.

The obverse of these coins conveys a message parallel to that of the coins they replaced. Sigloi and darics showed a figure representing both kingship and divinity; the tiarate head coins, too, show a militant Persian figure. On the Apadana reliefs at Persepolis, the military costume seems to have served specifically as a symbol of the king as warrior. On the tiarate head coins, the

garment is particularly charged. In addition to its symbolic value, it bears particular meaning for its local audience: those who actually *saw* the king would have seen him as a warrior.

These coins take a Greek portrayal of godhead and replace it with the head of the Persian king; on Greek issues, a head on the obverse of an issue is always that of a deity. The heads of the tiarate coins thus show the head of kingship, associated with divinity by allusion to heads on Greek coins. They combine practical and symbolic use in a single artifact.

A final category of evidence, mortuary remains, is particularly helpful in understanding what it was like to live in Asia Minor under Persian rule (Dusinberre 2013). Some people were buried in tombs carved into cliffs, others in simple cists, still others in chambers or sarcophagi covered by tumuli. Some had elaborate grave stelae or other markers. Some were entombed in temple-shaped mausolea or other distinctive structures. Certain forms followed local traditions, while others demonstrated radical new departures. The frequently local, geographically bounded, variability suggests that mortuary structures might serve as a way for local populaces to claim adherence to pre-Achaemenid traditions. At the same time, mortuary inclusions demonstrate uniformity of social agenda and presentation – particularly among the wealthy. Thus although mortuary *structures* show great local variability, mortuary *assemblages* do not.

This is important: the mortuary assemblages of the elite display conformity in visible culture and behavior (Özgen, Öztürk 1996; Baughan 2004; Delemen 2007; Miller 2007; Cahill 2010; Dusinberre 2013). Sealstones in semi-precious and other stones, or such materials as glass, share a basic iconographic repertoire of imperial power, even when the styles in which they were carved vary. Silver, gold, and bronze drinking assemblages include vessels of the same shapes, apparently used for the same purposes. Jewelry in bronze, copper, silver, and gold is crafted in forms charged with imperial meaning and elite nuances. Semi-precious stones and enamel inlays are used in the same colors and ways in bracelets, earrings, and necklaces. Gold foil clothing ornaments share iconography linked to Achaemenid imperial might. Even horse trappings signal prestige. The artifacts designed for the behavioral signaling of Achaemenid authority were objects in full public sight, designed to make a statement about the social identity and status of an individual (Figure 43.3).

Banqueting was an essential mortuary behavior. It is shown in visual representations associated with tombs across Anatolia. In addition to silver wine-drinking assemblages, grave goods made of clay emphasize the importance of banqueting. The overwhelming majority of ceramic vessels from tombs are drinking vessels – cups, storage vessels, mixing vessels, and pouring vessels – as well as wine-serving or -flavoring implements such as ladles, and frequent unguentaria. Of the more than 250 vessels recovered from tombs at Sardis, for instance, at least 100 are drinking vessels and another 100 or so are



Figure 43.3 Tomb Karaburun II, Banqueter on western wall. Source: Reproduced by permission of Stella Miller-Collett.

unguent vessels (Baughan, in Cahill 2010). Providing the dead with the means for proper banqueting, including such requisites as scented oils, clearly mattered to survivors. The importance of the specifically Persian drinking behaviors required by the new vessel shapes has already been discussed. Thus mortuary evidence illuminates the cohesion of the elite in various behaviors at the same time that it highlights differences across the various geographic regions of Asia Minor, each with its own history and identity.

I want to end with one important last aspect of identity: the freedom to express personal taste. The variety of artistic styles represented in Achaemenid Anatolian seals shows that patrons as well as artists could make individual choices based on their personal taste and personal identity as well as any number of other factors (Root 1991; Kaptan 2002; Dusingberre 2013). The range of styles found in grave stelae, even those found in the same area, is also profound. Achaemenid Anatolia was a place where imperial authority could be and was expressed powerfully, but it was also a place where individuals exercised autonomy, mostly in ways that allowed them to express their individual identity within the rubric of administrative authority.

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CHAPTER 44

Cyprus and the Mediterranean

Andreas Mehl

Cyprus (Figure 19.1) was a western outpost of the Achaemenid Empire, the only one of some importance to be situated not only on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea but in the sea itself. Yet, with its mixed population, a strong part of it being Greek, it resembled the Persian satrapies in Asia Minor, and especially their coastal regions. In this chapter, after a short survey of the sources, important events and situations regarding Achaemenid Cyprus will be summarized, and some structural topics, especially Cyprus' position in the Achaemenid Empire, the Cypriot city-kingdoms, and the relation between Greeks and Phoenicians on the island, its modern controversial discussion included, will be dealt with in detail.

Sources

Any knowledge on Achaemenid Cyprus depends on evidence given by scattered fragments of information in sources of different types (Zournatzi 2005, translated sources in Wallace and Orphanides 1990; Knapp 1996). Most of what one sees in excavated ancient Cypriot towns is of Roman imperial or even late Roman and early Byzantine time. Nonetheless, there is architectural evidence of Achaemenid time as, for example, the palace of Vouni in north-west Cyprus near the ancient town of Soli, or the presumably Persian siege ramp and the tunnels dug under this ramp at (Palaia) Paphus (see below), and, of course, non-architectural archeological evidence as pottery or statues

of city kings (for the historical interpretation cf. Tuplin 1996). For excavations, archeological finds, and their historical interpretations in the first instance one should take a look at the “Report(s) of the Department of Antiquities Cyprus” and the volumes of the “Centre d’Études Chypriotes.”

For the Achaemenid time, inscriptions from Cyprus itself are written in three languages and different scripts (Collombier 1991): Those few that are assigned by research to the so-called Eteo-Cypriots (but see below) cannot yet be read. Useful information is given by some of the Phoenician inscriptions (Masson and Sznycer 1972; Yon and Sznycer 1992, Amadasi Guzzo 2017). Among the Greek inscriptions, nearly all of those written in the Greek alphabet are dated not before Hellenism (*Inscriptiones Graecae* Vol. XV Part 2: will be published in 2020), but the inscriptions that are written in a syllabic script used only in Cyprus, are important for archaic, classical, and even Hellenistic Cyprus. Apart from new finds these inscriptions have been published and commented by Masson (Masson 1983, cf. Egetmeyer 2010 and many other publications: the latter is preparing the publication of the syllabic texts in *Inscriptiones Graecae* Vol. XV Part 1). Greek literature about Achaemenid Cyprus, especially historiography such as the works of Herodotus, Thucydides, being contemporaries, or much later Diodorus, were written outside Cyprus by authors not being from the island. Isocrates’ three Cypriot orations and pamphlets, written between c. 374 and 365 BCE, must be used very cautiously because of their evident Greek nationalist temper and their idealizing tendency (Körner 2017: pp. 71–98, 184–202, 300–310).

Political Events and Situations

Cypriot city kings must have placed themselves under the Persian Great King as the new power of the Near East perhaps as early as when Cyrus attacked the kingdom of Lydia about the year 546 BCE, and at the latest when Cambyses made war against Egypt in 526/5 BCE (Mehl 2009a,b: p. 64, for the whole paragraph Stylianou 1989; Tuplin 1996; Zournatzi 2005; especially Körner 2017: pp. 183–289). On the one hand, the Cypriot kings now had to help the Persian kings as before they had helped the Neo-Assyrian princes in their military ventures (Mehl 2009a: pp. 203–205, more detailed Körner 2017: pp. 133–156). On the other hand, the Great King was not present on coins issued by the Cypriot kings, who indeed were the sovereigns of the people in their city-kingdoms. In the first years of the fifth century BCE, when the Ionian Greeks revolted against the Persian domination, in Cypriot Salamis Gorgus remained loyal, but his brother, Onesilus, chose the side of the Ionians, usurped the throne, induced the other city kings to join his secession, and besieged Amathus because its king was the only one not to join. Although the

Cypriots got help from the Ionians, in 497 BCE the Persians besieged the towns of Salamis, Soli, and Paphos, subdued the rebellious Cypriot city-kings, and restored Gorgus to the throne of Salamis.

In Xerxes' I war against the Greeks in the motherland, the Cypriot city kings fought in the Persian fleet and together with the fleet were defeated in the naval battle off Salamis (480 BCE). During the following decades the Athenians tried several times to win over Cypriot city kings in order to expand their maritime empire into the eastern Mediterranean. Nevertheless, their slogan of freedom of Persia did not find approval in all Cypriot kingdoms. At least the kings of Marium, Citium, and Salamis resisted them (450/49 BCE). Phoenician rule in Marium and troubles caused by that rule seem to be a fiction of modern research (Mehl 2013a: pp. 147–148). At some time the king of Citium made war, perhaps twice, against the kingdom of Idalium and in the end conquered it (Mehl 2004: p. 19, Körner 2017: pp. 230–233, cf. the inscription in Masson 1983: no. 217).

In the second half of the fifth century BCE Phoenicians usurped the throne of Salamis. A young man claiming descent from the old royal family of the Teucrids, Euagoras (I), was forced to flee. He returned with some friends and managed to become king of Salamis. During his long reign he tried to expand his power on the island and was successful for some time. Only when the remaining city kings of Citium, Amathus, and Soli intervened at the court of the Great King, Artaxerxes II, was the Persian military machine moved off against Euagoras, but the latter managed to delay the action for years by intriguing between the great king's functionaries and generals, and even to annex some part of Phoenicia. Finally, he was besieged in Salamis and capitulated in 381 BCE, but nonetheless he was granted a treaty "from king to king" (Diodorus 15.9.2), securing his rule over Salamis. When some time after Euagoras' death (374 BCE) Phoenicia and Cyprus revolted, both were subdued a few years later in 345 BCE. Nonetheless, the Great King Artaxerxes III did not replace indirect rule by direct administration. About the middle of the fourth century BCE the king of Citium and Idalium was also king of Tamassus. Only after Alexander the Great had won the battle of Issus against Darius III and had entered Syria did the Cypriot city kings leave the Persian side in 332 BCE and join him, though it may be that not all of them did so at the same time. As from now, they fought against the Persian Great King.

The Island, Its Economy, People, and Political Structure

In contrast to the Aegean Sea with its many islands, Cyprus is – besides the ancient cities of Tyre and Aradus – the only island in the eastern Mediterranean. It is situated near to the Asiatic continent in an angle, the peak of which is the

region of Flat Cilicia with the today Gulf of Iskenderun and the sides of which are the southeast coast of Asia Minor and the Syrian or Levantine coast. The minimum distances from Cyprus to the continent are about 65 km toward Rugged Cilicia and 95 km toward north Syria. With its area of about 9250 km² it is one of the large islands in the Mediterranean. Its surface is formed by two mountain ranges and a plain in between them, and its long coastline is mostly rocky and mountainous and not so often sandy and plain. In antiquity most of its ancient towns were situated on the coast and so – unlike today – most people lived near the sea and the jobs of many men depended on overseas trade. Nonetheless, Cyprus' important products did not come from the sea but from the island's agriculture, forestry for timber, and mining, melting, and processing of copper, a big part of these activities presumably being under the city kings.

The island's population consisted of Greeks (more), Phoenicians (less), and, especially in the town and region of Amathus, perhaps people for whom modern research has invented the name "Eteo-Cypriots" ("true Cypriots"), so describing them as indigenous (Seibert 1976; Wiesehöfer 2000). However, Given (1991: pp. 6–39 and 184–195) and Reyes (1994: esp. 13–17 and 22) deny the historical existence of the Eteo-Cypriots and in consequence that of their inscriptions. Egetmeyer (2009) argues against their positions. Though he seems convincing, in all historical actions and situations of the island and its towns we find Cypriots who are, or at least seem to be, either Greeks or Phoenicians. Cyprus' geographic-political pattern until early Hellenism being the city-state ruled by kings, the population of the city-kingdoms was not ethnically pure but mixed (cf. Körner 2017: pp. 71–128). Most city-kingdoms had a Greek majority; only the kingdoms and towns of Citium on the south coast and Lapethus on the north coast were shaped visibly by Phoenicians. Altogether, the island was not divided into a Greek and a Phoenician part. So, Salamis was predominantly Greek, its neighbor Citium Phoenician, further to the west Amathus was mixed, Curium and Paphus Greek. As a result, Greeks and Phoenicians, and perhaps the Eteo-Cypriots lived side by side. What this means will be discussed below.

Persian soldiers of whatever ethnic origin (with the possible exception of a garrison in Salamis) were on the island several times, though never for long periods. In any case, they were there in the first decade of the fifth century BCE, to suppress the participation of Cypriot city kings in the Ionian Revolt, and later on during the Athenian fights for Cyprus. At that time presumably they were also in the war together with troops of the king of Citium against the kingdom of Idalium in the early fourth century BCE to put down the king of Salamis, Euagoras I, and about the middle of the same century to subdue revolting Cyprus again. There seems to be exciting archeological evidence for Persian troops besieging the town of Paphus, but though a lot of objects have

been found in Cyprus that may be defined as Persian, there is – in contrast to Asia Minor but in accordance with lower Babylonia – no proof of Persians living on the island for a longer time. The so-called Achaemenid palace of Vouni can – contrary to other opinions – be considered neither the seat of a Persian official nor that of a Cypriot city king who wanted to demonstrate a pro-Persian attitude (Petit 1991; Tuplin 1996; Zournatzi 2005).

During most of its history Cyprus' fate was influenced and even determined by empires from beyond the island. So Cyprus being a part of the Achaemenid Empire was a normal situation. There were various reasons for Cyprus being dependent on or even subject to external powers. The island was situated near to the Asiatic mainland. Its natural resources, especially its copper and timber, were of much interest, as was the maritime experience of many Cypriots. In the period of interest here, its internal structure also facilitated the annexation of Cyprus: From the beginning of historical evidence the island was not a political unity, but nearly each of its towns together with its countryside was governed by its own prince, and none of these city kings was in a position above the other city kings (also for the following Watkin 1988; Zournatzi 1996, 2005; Mehl 2009a; Körner 2017: *passim*). Even the king of Paphos, who combined the royal power with the rank of the high priest of Cyprus' main goddess "Wanassa" ("Mistress," in Greece Aphrodite), did not have a superior position. The number of these small kingdoms varied around the figure of 10 (Iacovou 2002, Körner 2017: pp. 44–57), though maybe the number changed more than we see in our scarce evidence. As events and situations in the Achaemenid period show, joint actions of Cypriot princes never included all of them, and some kings tried to annex other city-kingdoms (see above pp. 614–615). Cyprus' city kings were interested in their own kingdoms and personal power, and at least some of them rivaled with princes of other city-kingdoms. As civic institutions were rudimentary, the kings' positions and actions were decisive for the city-states' policies, and certainly for their policy toward the other Cypriot city-kingdoms and political powers beyond the island. Modern assessments of Cypriot kingship are strongly influenced by preconceived ideas about the role of Greek and "Oriental" influence (Körner 2017: pp. 293–387 with an abundant overview and an own, reasonable decision for the model of 'traditional rule'; Mehl 2016 gives a critical synopsis).

Before being part of the Achaemenid Empire, Cyprus had been subject to the Neo-Assyrian Empire and then perhaps for a short time to the Neo-Babylonian and late Pharaonic empires (Mehl 2009a,b; Körner 2016, 2017: pp. 130–181: both also for the principle of suzerainty in the Achaemenid Empire). While evidence for the latter two is extremely poor, it tells clearly that Cyprus in the Neo-Assyrian and the Achaemenid empires – as some other regions of these empires – was governed by its city princes and that the latter were under the suzerainty of the Assyrian and Persian Great King respectively,

the Persian Great King being literally “king of kings.” Nonetheless, the Cypriot kingdoms were included in the territorial administrative organization of the empire. So in the evidently multistage organization of the Achaemenid Empire, Cyprus was part of the Syrian subdivision of the satrapy Assyria and the super-satrapy Babylonia, and so the Great King’s representative responsible for the affairs of Cyprus was the royal functionary of Syria (Jacobs 1994: *passim*; also for the following Mehl 2004). However, this did not make it impossible for Cypriot princes to contact the Great King directly. The internal situation in a territory with its own government was of no interest for the suzerain, as long as it did not endanger its affiliation to the empire and the influx of tribute. This explains why Cypriot city kings such as those of Citium and Salamis could annex neighboring city-kingdoms.

Greeks and Phoenicians in Cyprus: A Peculiar Discussion

Some events reported above will have shown that the mutual policy of the city kings and their friendly or hostile position toward the Persian suzerain were not bound to their ethnicity. This seems to be a simple remark, which one will not contradict, but behind it lies a problem: At first glance the present situation with Greeks, being the majority, and Turks, being the minority, on the island may be regarded as analogous to some historical situations, in which also two ethnic, religious, and cultural groups existed in Cyprus – Greeks as the majority and in antiquity Phoenicians, in the Middle Ages French and Italians (Venetians) as the minority, the situation being complicated by the influence exerted by powers from outside the island. So, a special analogy presupposing the equation of the Phoenicians with the Turks is seen between the ancient and the present situation: As Turkey supports the Turks in Cyprus, the Persian government is thought to have been on the Cypriot Phoenicians’ side. The explosive nature of those analogies is seen especially by Greek Cypriots in the political preponderance of the respective ethnic minority and the repression of the ethnic majority, the latter being the Greeks, over centuries and even millennia. This is the background of a controversy like that of Demetriou (1992) against Maier (1985) about the relation between Cypriot Phoenicians, Cypriot Greeks, and the Persians as the masters of the island (for Demetriou’s position cf. already Gjerstad 1948, 1979).

As it is not the task here to check the analogy between present and Achaemenid times in Cyprus, only some evidence for the relation between Greeks and Phoenicians on the island will be expounded in addition to that already given above. As Greeks and Phoenicians lived next door to each other,

one will imagine that sometimes problems arose between individuals, families, or small groups of both. But there is no evidence for such debates or even clashes. On the contrary: a tale of early Hellenistic origin states that in Salamis a young non-aristocratic Phoenician bearing a Greek personal name fell in love with the daughter of king Nicocreon – who was to be the last city king of Salamis – and his wife, whose Greek name “Biothea” must be the translation of a Phoenician (!) personal name, but he was rejected by both the princess and her parents and killed himself. This story may or may not have a historical background, but in any case its details show that it does not reflect a controversial situation on the ethnic but rather on the social level (Mehl 1996: pp. 383–384, cf. 395–397).

The idea that the Phoenicians in Cyprus were in principle on the Persian side, because not only they but also their “cousins” in the homeland Phoenicia were subject to the Persian Great King, does not match the historical reality (see above p. 615). Besides, one must not forget that a significant number of the Phoenicians, those in the western Mediterranean, especially the Carthaginians, lived outside the Persian Empire, while Greeks lived not only outside the Persian sphere in Greece and in the western Mediterranean but also in large numbers in Asia Minor and so, like the Greek Cypriots, within the Achaemenid Empire. Indeed, some of the Greek city-states in Asia Minor were on the Athenian or Spartan side, and at a later time on the side of Alexander the Great against Persia, but others made a Pro-Persian policy against Greek and Macedonian interventions which claimed to free the Greeks from the Persian “yoke.” Among Greeks, Persians, and indigenous peoples living in Asia Minor there was both “iranization and hellenization.” This does not hint at enmity between Greeks and Persians (quotation Keen 1998: p. 61, cf. Briant 2002: pp. 697–709). In a similar way, but without Persians living there, Greeks and Phoenicians co-existed in Cyprus. Their living together may have been facilitated by the fact that the Greeks of Cyprus were not as ‘Greek’ as the Greeks in the motherland and in the west, and that they had some peculiarities in common with the Cypriot Phoenicians, especially the structure of the city-kingdoms (for Cypriot peculiarities cf. Collombier 1995: pp. 583–851). Finally, one should be aware that in contrast to some opinions, perhaps caused, too, by an analogy with modern times, there was no iron curtain between the Greek and the Persian sphere, which would have separated Achaemenid Cyprus from Greece, but on the contrary there was trade and with it the exchange of persons and ideas between both spheres, and Cypriots and Greeks, as well as Phoenicians, took part in this trade and exchange (Mehl 2013a,b). To sum up, there was no fundamental enmity between Greeks and Phoenicians in Cyprus, but a co-existence that will have been altogether friendly (Mehl 1996: pp. 405–406).

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CHAPTER 45

The Greek World

Mischa Meier

Traditional Interpretations and Source Issues

The relationship between Greeks and Persians was a complex matter. Of course, since the wars in 490–479 BCE, Greeks considered the Persians to be plainly the “Other,” the true incarnation of “Barbarians.” Moreover, the division of the antique world into Greeks (and later Romans, respectively) and barbarians, a structural constant which existed well into late antiquity and beyond, had its most important roots in the major conflict between Greeks and Persians. During this conflict, associations were made that had a lasting impact on the image of the “other” for several centuries. These included the construction of an East–West contrast that was solidified in a dichotomy between Europe and Asia. In many respects, this contrast was a heavily loaded concept, since it was during the conflict with the Persians that the Greeks first developed an emphatic notion of freedom in terms of foreign affairs in which their own independence was pitted against the supposed despotism of the Orient (e.g. Hdt. 1.5.3–1.6.3; Raaflaub 1985). Indeed, this dichotomy managed to hang on for centuries, wielding a great deal of power over the years in its different forms and modifications. Quite certainly, its influence can even still be found today in different ideas and clichés. For example, many aspects of Orientalism and Eurocentrism can be traced back in a variety of ways to the conflicts between Greeks and Persians in the fifth century BCE (Wiesehöfer 2009).

Nevertheless, there was not only hostility. Unquestionably, *medismós* (collaboration with the Persians) was considered to be a serious offence, even akin to high treason (see Hdt. 6.49; Graf 1984). Even high-ranking individuals were charged with *medismós* (e.g. the Spartan regent Pausanias or Themistocles the Athenian, Thuc. 1.95; 1.128–138; Plut. Them. 29; Schumacher 1987; Blösel 2004); suffixes such as “the Mede” added to the names of those who were to be banished appear repeatedly on Athenian *ostraka*. Yet, none of this prevented a “Persian trend” from developing in Athens during the late fifth century BCE or the lively exchange of goods between Greeks and Persians. A lingering interest in the environments surrounding the Achaemenid Great Kings is also reflected in literature dating back to Herodotus, and especially to Ctesias of Cnidus (Bichler 2000; Rollinger et al. 2011; Wiesehöfer et al. 2010). Greeks also repeatedly entered into the service of the Persians voluntarily (albeit quite often they were compelled to do so) as political advisors or, respectively, honored guests, as military leaders, soldiers, doctors, administrative officials, craftsmen, artists, or workers. As far back as the sixth century BCE, Greeks left their mark on Achaemenid art, such as on the palatial buildings of the Persian Great Kings or on the grave of Cyrus II in Pasargadae. In the fortification inscription of Darius I, Lydians and Ionians are named as craftsmen who were involved in the building of the palace of Susa, and Greeks also contributed to the design and construction of the palace of Persepolis, which was finished under Artaxerxes I. The reverse also holds true as Persian influences can be found in architecture and artifacts in Greece and Asia Minor, respectively (Rollinger 2006: pp. 138–145; Wiesehöfer 2009: pp. 171; 174; 178–179; Marek 2010: pp. 214–226).

For the most part, however, the complex interrelationships between Greeks and Persians have been boiled down to the existential political conflicts. This is largely due to the limited sources available. The majority of them come from the Greek side and therefore reflect Greek perspectives. Persian sources, meanwhile, offer very little useful material regarding Greco-Persian relations and the situation of the Greeks under Achaemenid rule; this indirectly reflects the relative insignificance of the Greek polities on the western periphery of the empire for the Achaemenids. The major sources available to us are all Greek literary texts – ranging from Aeschylus’ tragedy *The Persians* (472 BCE) to histories such as those of Herodotus and Xenophon, and on to texts whose content and significance are still the subject of much controversy, such as Ctesias’ *Persica*.

Sources like these always contain a wide variety of information, but they must be dealt with carefully. Even Herodotus’ *Histories*, which at first glance deal with the great conflict between Greeks and Persians from about 500–479 BCE and the history leading up to the wars, is laden with myriad interpretational

pitfalls. Herodotus' portrayal fits within his overall attempt to trace the origin of the Europe–Asia or, respectively, Greek–Barbarian dichotomy. Herodotus historicizes this in a magnificent way, going all the way back to mythical times, but his account is nonetheless only a construction of the fifth century BCE (Bichler 2000).

Greeks, Lydians, and Persians in Asia Minor – The Problem of the “Vassal-Tyrants”

The Greeks had always been fascinated by the impressive speed with which the Teispid Cyrus of Anshan was able to overthrow Astyages, the last ruler of the Median confederation, while simultaneously launching an expansion campaign which even Babylonia could no longer resist in 539 BCE. Even before the fall of the last Babylonian ruler, Nabonid, Cyrus had already redrawn the political map of western Asia Minor – with significant consequences for the Greek *poleis* on the western coast and on the off-shore islands. He was able to fend off an attack by the Lydian king Croesus, who was most likely killed as the Persians pillaged his capital city of Sardis in 541 (?) BCE. As the Persians did with all other annexed territories, they took control of all of Lydia and integrated it into the structure of their own empire, complete with its administration (Jacobs 1994: pp. 89–92). The heart of Lydia – Sardis – thus became the seat of a governor appointed by the Great King. More importantly, however, the Ionian, Aeolian, and Dorian cities in western Asia Minor fell under Persian rule. Herodotus takes up one of his central motifs when he comments that the Greeks were at first “free” (*eleutheroi*) and had to pay tribute for the first time under Croesus (Hdt. 1.6). Only the Milesians were prepared to come to an understanding with the Persians and were thus able to arrange to receive the same conditions that they had enjoyed under Croesus; this, in turn, guaranteed Miletus a privileged status in the period that followed (Hdt. 1.141).

However, when the Lydian Pactyes, whom Cyrus had appointed to collect the tributes, revolted against the Persians, the Ionians immediately joined his side. It took a great effort on the part of the Median commanders Mazares and Harpagus to put down the revolt and at the same time take each individual Greek city for the Persians while still conquering the territories of Caria and Lycia (Hdt. 1.141–176). Not all Greeks wanted to suffer this fate; some of them voluntarily left their city and resettled elsewhere. The rest surrendered to Persian control, except the Milesians who made a treaty with Cyrus. “Thus was Ionia for the second time enslaved” (Hdt. 1.169).

While it must have been relatively easy for the Persians to integrate the successively conquered territorial realms as they could rely on the existing governmental and administrative structures, they met with much larger problems when it came to the Greek cities because these lacked territorial and political unity (Walter 1993: pp. 273–278). Each *polis* was an independent polity in which individual aristocrats competed for political influence and had to contend with the *démos*, so it generally could not be assumed that there were any stable political conditions. In light of these rather precarious circumstances, the Persians attempted to gain access to the *poleis* by supporting individual aristocrats which they had turned into their own contact persons by ensuring their personal loyalty (this was especially important for the smooth turnover of the tributes). These aristocrats appear as “tyrants” in the Greek sources (e.g. Hdt. 4.137–138) and are often referred to in scholarship as “vassal-tyrants,” but this generalization is not entirely unproblematic. In fact, the Persians did not at all employ “tyrants” of their choosing in all *poleis* but rather they often only helped individual aristocrats gain control. This was often initiated by the aristocrats themselves (e.g. Syloson of Samos, Hdt. 3.140–149). For the Persians, it was not a matter of a systematic “toppling of the constitution” in the Greek *poleis* because, for the most part, they sought to exert influence only in *stasis* situations. The term “vassal-tyrant” can really be used only in reference to a few individual cases (e.g. Aeaces of Samos: Hdt. 6.22–25). Generally speaking, however, the Greek cities were mostly left alone as long as they regularly paid their tributes and were willing to provide military service. Nevertheless, the Persians did not shy away from energetically intervening when they saw a danger to their own rule: The Samian tyrant Polycrates (c. 538/37–522 BCE), after conquering and plundering around the sea with his powerful naval fleet, left his former ally, the Egyptian pharaoh Amasis (570–526 BCE), and supported the Persian campaign against Egypt. The Persians, however, were suspicious of his activities; their governor in Sardis, Oroetes, crucified him (Hdt. 3.125).

Not only the example of Samos makes it clear that supporting local aristocrats did not provide any kind of long-term security for Persian rule. More than any other, the glamorous figure of the tyrant Histiaeus of Miletus (Kienast 1994), who was quite obviously trying to constantly increase his own sphere of power independent of that of the Persians, reveals the instability of the political situations in the Greek *poleis* and the resultant problems facing the Persians. Herodotus provides a novel-like account of the adventures of Histiaeus, which can possibly be traced back to an anti-Histiaeus biographical tradition that existed at the time (Murray 1988: p. 486). In Herodotus’ *Histories*, Histiaeus appears as the sole initiator of the Ionian Revolt, but the link between the revolt and the Histiaeus complex might be an invention on the part of the historian (Walter 1993: p. 266).

The Ionian Revolt

Under the reign of Darius I the Achaemenid Empire expanded to the west. Darius' gaze increasingly focused on the islands along the coast of Asia Minor, and he also took over Thrace and transformed the Macedonian king into his vassal; from this point onward, Greece found itself practically encircled by the Persians. Darius' campaign against the "Scythians" (in the lower Danube area) around 513 BCE, however, yielded no great gains. At the time, Histiaeus was one of the commanders of the Persian's Greek military contingents and he saved a bridge over the Danube from being destroyed, against the will of the Athenian Miltiades, thereby securing the retreat of the Great King (Hdt. 4.137; 4.141). Darius rewarded Histiaeus by giving him control of Myrcinus in Thrace, but shortly thereafter called him back to his court at Susa to be an advisor and in order to be better able to keep Histiaeus under control (Hdt. 5.11; 5.23–24). It was from Susa that Histiaeus called on his "deputy" (*epítropos*, Hdt. 5.106.1) in Miletus, his son-in-law and cousin Aristagoras, to revolt against the Persians.

Aristagoras, however, had enough reasons of his own for defecting from the Persians: An unfortunate venture against the island *polis* of Naxos – for which he had received a great deal of support from Darius' brother, Artaphernes, who had resided in Sardis as Satrap of Lydia from the 510s BCE onward – had failed. This had not only resulted in a financial crisis for Aristagoras but also weakened his position in Miletus and discredited him in the eyes of Artaphernes. The only thing left for the Milesian tyrant was to take the bull by the horns: He officially resigned as tyrant, proclaimed *isonomía* (Hdt. 5.37.2), and ensured that Persian-friendly tyrants in other Ionian cities were either exiled or – in exceptional cases (Mytilene) – killed (Hdt. 5.38; 6.9). The Ionians now commissioned Aristagoras to try to rustle up support for the revolt on the Greek mainland. The Spartans declined, the Athenians sent only 20 penteconters, the Eretrians five. The Ionians were not completely on their own as they were joined by the Carians as well as the Cypriot *poleis* (except Amathus). The revolt expanded quickly: Sardis was taken in 498 BCE, and the Ionians celebrated victory at the Hellespont (Hdt. 5.103–104). But upon hearing news of further Persian forces, panic broke out among the Greeks who were defeated at Ephesus, leading the Athenians to withdraw their ships (Hdt. 5.103). Nonetheless, it still took the Persians several years to put down the revolt. After recapturing Cyprus in 497 BCE, and victories on the Hellespont, the Persians were hit by severe setbacks in Caria even though the Greek forces suffered from lack of a clear strategy and a unified command. Aristagoras fled to Myrcinus in 497 BCE where he was killed in a battle with the resident Thracians. Histiaeus had himself sent to Ionia in 496 BCE to end the conflict, but he never managed to set foot back on his old stomping ground. He fell

under the control of Artaphernes in 493 BCE who had him killed and then sent his head to Darius in Susa. The Great King ordered his head to be honorably buried (Hdt. 6.26–30).

By this point, the revolt in Asia Minor had already fallen apart. In 496 BCE, the Greeks had been defeated by Persian forces in a naval battle near the island of Lade (to the west of Miletus). Yet again, this defeat revealed the effects of lack of a clear leadership structure (although the assembly of the Ionian League at least tried to coordinate the war effort, Kienast 2002: pp. 16–17), as well as internal dissension. The most Samians had withdrawn from the battle (Lateiner 1982: pp. 151–160), and others then followed (Hdt. 6.14). However, it would be much too one-sided to attribute the Greek defeat at Lade only to the failure of the revolting forces. The Persians had in fact had their own powerful fleet ever since they had taken Cyprus and the Phoenicians had fallen under the rule of Cambyses, a fleet that was well in a position to stand up against the 353 Greek ships at the battle of Lade.

The Greek defeat at sea was followed by the destruction of Miletus in 494 BCE. The Athenian poet Phrynichus turned this story into tragedy as the *Capture of Miletus* (*Miletou Halosis*). However, as these events were embarrassing for the Athenians who had withdrawn their 20 ships, Phrynichus was sentenced to pay a fine of 1000 drachmas and his drama was banned from the stage (Hdt. 6.21).

The events of the Ionian Revolt are, in fact, key to any discussion of Persian rule in western Asia Minor, especially as they ideally exemplify many fundamental issues. That said, however, there is still the problem of the available sources. For example, Herodotus, about whose sources there has been much speculation, presents the revolt under the banner of a Greek struggle for freedom against Persian oppressors and the tyrants whom they supported (see Hdt. 6.32). But such interpretative categories first developed in the course of the fifth century BCE and were then applied to earlier events. Furthermore, there has also been much debate about the origins of the Ionian Revolt. Some scholars assumed that the Greeks were primarily motivated by economic reasons to rise up against the Persians (Lateiner 1982: pp. 136–137; Wallinga 1984; Murray 1988: pp. 477–478). It must be said, however, that nothing initially changed in the structural organization of Asia Minor under Persian rule and archeological findings have not verified an economic decline in Ionia, but rather the opposite (Miletus, see Hdt. 5.28; Georges 2000; Marek 2010: p. 191; for an assessment, Briant 2002: pp. 149–150). There remains a political interpretation of the revolt, but care must be taken here as well. In Miletus, Aristagoras had simply become entangled in a hopeless situation that led to a local *stasis* which then forced him to act (Walter 1993: p. 277). It can also be assumed that widespread dissatisfaction

existed in other *poleis* as well, so that the residents willingly took advantage of the opportunity to rid themselves of their tyrants. For certain, however, this would not yet have been “marketed” as a struggle for freedom around 500 BCE. Instead, the respective concrete situations in and between the Greek *poleis* presumably played a decisive role; if the main purpose had really only been to get rid of the Persians (see, e.g., Kienast 2002: p. 19) then the crisis period at the beginning of Darius’ reign in 522–520 BCE would have been a much more advantageous time to revolt.

The Reorganization of Persian Rule After the Ionian Revolt and the Problem of Darius I’s Reforms

The Ionian Revolt is also quite significant when looking concretely at how Persian rule was organized because following the destruction of Miletus, the victors were forced to reconsolidate their earlier position. Most of the male Milesians were killed, and the women and children were enslaved – the usual fate of captured cities in antiquity. Some of the survivors were deported and resettled on the Tigris river. According to Herodotus (6.19), the shrine of Apollo in Didyma near Miletus went up in flames, but there is no archaeological evidence to this effect. The Persians reconquered all of the Greek cities and punished them with similar severity (see Hdt. 6.9; 6.32). The geographer and historian Hecataeus, who had tried to convince Aristagoras not to revolt against the Persians (see 5.36), supposedly pled with the Persians to take a moderate course of action against the Ionian cities (Diod. Sic. 10.25.4).

Herodotus comments that the measures Artaphernes implemented in 493 BCE brought peace to the Ionians (Hdt. 6.42.2). The governor contractually obligated the *poleis* to resolve any future conflicts with each other amicably. Thus, the Persians continued their strategy of only trying to exercise control over the Greek *poleis* rather than employing a system of direct rule; social structures such as economic, religious, and cultural traditions were thereby left untouched for the most part. Furthermore, Artaphernes had the territories of the *poleis* measured exactly and then used the results to calculate the tributes; he came to the result that there was no need for raising the tributes following the Ionian Revolt. It is also quite possible that the assessments made by the Persians in this process later formed the basis for the tribute system of the Delian League (Hdt. 6.42; Wallinga 1989; Briant 2002: p. 394).

In the spring of 492 BCE, the Persian military commander Mardonius arrived on the scene to continue with the restoration work that Artaphernes had begun. According to Herodotus, Mardonius deposed the tyrants in the

Ionian *poleis* and set up “democracies” in their place (Hdt. 6.43). Behind what at first appears to be a rather confusing assertion, this was in fact really a kind of assurance from the Great King that the Persians would refrain from intervening in the internal structures of the polities, or rather, that the polities retained their internal autonomy. In fact, however, Herodotus’ claim was only partially true. Several of the *poleis* were again ruled by tyrants. Moreover, Persian garrisons were stationed here and there.

It is still difficult to decipher whether these measures taken to reorganize Achaemenid rule along the western coast of Asia Minor were related to the so-called reforms undertaken by Darius. In all probability, Darius’ primary goal was to define a set scale for the tributes due, especially because the financing of the fleet established under Cambyses had led to a short-term overload on his resources (Wallinga 1984, 1987). The organizational measures taken by Artaphernes after the Ionian Revolt could indeed be considered as a reflection of these more general reforms under Darius (Briant 2002: pp. 69–70; Wiesehöfer 2009: p. 172).

As a rule, Artaphernes and the Achaemenid governors in Asia Minor who followed are referred to as satraps, but there is a variety of problems associated with this label (see Jacobs 1994: pp. 118–146; Marek 2010: pp. 205–209; Briant 2002). The title “satrap” first appears in the Bīsūtūn Inscription authored by Darius I in reference to two deputies of the Great King in Bactria and Arachosia (DB III 14; DB III 56); in Greek sources (*satrapeie* for the first time in Hdt. 3.89.1, *satrápes* from Xenophon onward) the term is not used uniformly, as *epítropos* or *hýparchos* are also used and these could also refer to officials at ranks below a governor. The Persians distinguished principally between three kinds of Ionians (“Yauna”), namely those of the lowlands, the islands, and the “shield-bearing” (?) – albeit the Carians are also noted in their texts (Rollinger 2006: pp. 132–133). The administrative center for western Asia Minor remained the old Lydian royal seat of Sardis until the fourth century BCE (Wiesehöfer 2009: p. 171). The satrap of Sardis, under whom the Yauna fell as a tribute-paying group, kept an eye over an area of varying size that during some phases even included part of Cappadocia. In the fourth century BCE (Debord 1999: pp. 116–157), he primarily competed with the satraps of Phrygia on the Hellespont (seat: Dascylium). Meanwhile, during the first half of the fourth century BCE, the Carians under the native dynasty of the Hecatomnids formed their own satrapy (Marek 2010: pp. 208–209). From the end of the fifth century BCE onward, the satrap of Sardis also carried the title *káranos* as commander of the Persian troops in western and central Asia Minor and was outfitted with special authority. The satraps could, in turn, appoint their own officials or representatives, such as the “vassal-tyrants” mentioned, including local dynastic rulers and even women (Mania: Xen. Hell. 3.1.10–14; Debord 1999).

The So-called Persian Wars and the Delian League

The Ionian Revolt also had consequences for the Persians. Their rule in the North Aegean region had eroded. Although Herodotus claims that the aim of the Persian's so-called Mardonius campaign in the north Aegean area in 492 BCE was to punish Athens and Eretria for their support of the rebellion (Hdt. 6.43.4), their real intention was presumably to reestablish their control over Thrace and Macedon (Zahrnt 1992). From the perspective of the Greeks after 480/79 BCE, this campaign must already have appeared to be part of a much larger attempt to conquer Greece as a whole. Herodotus did not at all doubt that this was indeed part of Darius' master plan (Hdt. 3.134–138; 5.2; 5.31–32; 5.105; 6.94).

The fact that the Persians continued to have their eye on Greece even after the end of the Mardonius campaign was a result of the fatal intervention of Athens and Eretria in the Ionian Revolt. From the Persian perspective, it was above all Athens that was in need of discipline: In 507/06 BCE, as the Athenians felt threatened by the Spartans, they had appealed to the Persians to form an alliance and their messengers gave them earth and water as a sign of subservience. Although the Athenian assembly never ratified this act, and the messengers were subjected to severe reproaches upon their return, Athens was nonetheless considered by the Persians to be a city belonging to the Great King (Hdt. 5.73; see also 8.142; Berthold 2002), and the Athenian involvement in the Ionian Revolt was a matter of a rebellious subservient polity. The goal of the first direct Persian attack on Greece was thus to punish Athens and Eretria. Contingents from the Greek *poleis* in Asia Minor were part of this campaign that was commanded by Datis the Mede and Artaphernes, the son of the like-named satrap of Sardis, in 490 BCE. While the Persians successfully took some of the islands of the Cyclades (to secure the Persian sphere of influence) and Eretria, the Athenians under their *strategós* Miltiades, who had been forced to give up his own area of rule on the Thracian Chersonese to the Persians (Hdt. 6.41), defeated the Persians at the Battle of Marathon. This was a key turning point for the Athenians, because their polity, which had been fundamentally reorganized by the reforms of Cleisthenes, had now successfully passed its first major test. Accordingly, as early as the fifth century BCE, this glorious victory at Marathon developed into one of the central myths surrounding the foundation of Athenian democracy (Hölkeskamp 2001; Jung 2006).

Darius' son and successor, Xerxes, however, had much greater plans for Greece. Although it is not fully clear whether the campaigns launched by Xerxes were intended to fully conquer Greece or were merely an attempt to force the Greek *poleis* to recognize Persian supremacy, the massive amount of armaments clearly indicates that Xerxes' goal was to find a long-term solution

for the Greek problem. While some Greek *poleis* and *ethne* (such as the Thebans and the Thessalians) allied with the Persians, and others remained neutral (Argos) or bided their time (Delphi), about 30 *poleis* joined together in the “Hellenic League” to defend themselves against the Persians (Baltrusch 1994: pp. 30–51). With the help of this alliance, officially under the leadership of Sparta, the Persians were defeated at the battles of Salamis (480 BCE) and Plataeae (479 BCE) and forced to retreat for good.

At Themistocles’ initiative, the Athenians had massively built up their fleet of triremes prior to the invasion of Xerxes, which paid off in the victory at Salamis. Athens thus became the leading power in the Aegean thanks to its fleet, especially after the Persian fleet was destroyed near the Mycale promontory in 479 BCE. The Ionian island *poleis* who had supported the struggle against the Persians had also already been integrated into the Hellenic League at the so-called conference of Samos (Hdt. 9.106). This newly-won freedom of movement on the sea made it possible for the Greeks to go on the offensive against the Persians, sieging the Persian garrison stationed in Sestos (on the Thracian Chersonese); expeditions against the Persians on Cyprus and in Byzantium followed in 478 BCE (Hdt. 9.114–118; Thuc. 1.94). Principal differences of opinion between Sparta and Athens over the further course of the Greeks’ endeavors, however, led the Spartans to withdraw from active warfare in 478/77 BCE. The Athenians, in turn, formed their own war alliance intended to protect the Ionians against the Persians – the Delian League. The goal of this alliance was to continue the war against the Persians in order to take revenge and to seize booty (Thuc. 1.96). It was comprised of free, independent members organized under Athenian leadership (initially most of the Greek *poleis* on the Hellespont, Aeolian, and Ionian coastal cities from Sigeion to Teichioussa, *poleis* on the islands of the Aegean and most likely Byzantium) that either provided ships for battle or paid tribute to the alliance whose treasury had been set up in Delos. These members were then guaranteed protection against Persian invasions (Baltrusch 1994: pp. 52–64). The Athenians themselves most likely saw the main purpose of this naval alliance as creating a kind of safety belt to protect against further Persian attacks. In the years that followed, this alliance grew rapidly, but the Athenians basically turned it into their own personal instrument of power (*arché*). Any attempts made to leave the league were violently crushed (Thuc. 1.96–98). During its first phase, the naval alliance was primarily under the influence of the Athenian Cimon, the son of Miltiades, who led the alliance’s first campaigns. In fact, his entire family completely identified itself with the war against the Persians (see the portrayal of the Battle of Marathon in the *stoá poikíle* on the Athenian *agorá*; Hölkeskamp 2001; Jung 2006). It was also under the leadership of Cimon in 466/65 BCE that during the double victory at the Battle of the

Eurymedon (Pamphylia, near modern-day Manavgat) the alliance destroyed a Phoenician fleet with whose help the Persians wanted to reclaim their lost advantage at sea (Thuc. 1.100; Diod. Sic. 11.61.1). As a result of these events, the *poleis* in Caria and Lycia could also be persuaded to join the naval alliance.

But the tide began to turn in favor of the Persians under the reign of Artaxerxes I (465–424/23 BCE). The league, and especially Athens, suffered horrendous losses while supporting a revolt against the Persians in Egypt that ultimately failed (460–454 BCE); an attempt to pry Cyprus out of Persian control also fell flat in 450 BCE. In fact, these were the naval league's last offensive campaigns against the Persians. It still remains unclear whether a formal peace treaty was actually made in 449 BCE ("Peace of Callias") or whether the fighting was stopped by mutual agreement as an official peace treaty is only first mentioned by authors in the fourth century BCE. However, this issue is irrelevant to the end result: The Athenians and the Persians accustomed themselves to the *status quo* and the Ionian city-states initially retained their independence (Welwei 1999: pp. 96–107).

The Consequences of the Peloponnesian War – Greeks and Persians at the Beginning of the Fourth Century BCE

Toward the end of the Peloponnesian War between Athens and Sparta (431–404 BCE), the Delian League fell apart. *Poleis* in Ionia and on the Hellespont simply withdrew from the alliance in light of the rather precarious situation of the Athenians, and some dynasts and city-states in Caria and Lycia went over to the Persians. After putting down revolts that had been supported by, among others, the Athenians, Tissaphernes, the Persian satrap in Sardis and *káranos* in western Asia Minor, came to an agreement with Sparta in 412/11 BCE to support the Peloponnesians in their war against Athens. In return, Sparta recognized Persian rule over the Greeks in western Asia Minor (Thuc. 8.18; 8.37; 8.58; see also 8.5; 8.43; 8.87). A few years later, however, Tissaphernes was forced out by Cyrus the Younger, the brother of Artaxerxes II (404–359 BCE), and found himself left only with Caria and Miletus (Xen. Hell. 1.4.3). Cyrus' campaign against Babylon in 401 BCE must also be read within this context of an internal dispute among the Achaemenid leaders; Cyrus' goal was to oust Artaxerxes and take control of the Persian Empire for himself. But he fell at the Battle of Cunaxa (near Babylon), even though his army comprised mainly of Greek soldiers had won. Xenophon describes the arduous retreat of this army back to the coast of the Black Sea in his *Anabasis*. This work contains a plethora of information about the ways of life of the

Anatolian population, but it offers little in terms of the organization of Persian rule and the relationship between the Persians and the locals (Lane Fox 2004).

Following the failure of Cyrus' uprising, Tissaphernes returned to his old position as *káranos* (Diod. Sic. 14.26.4). He was then confronted by his earlier allies, the Spartans, who had launched offensives against the Persians in 399 BCE, presumably aiming to once again securing the independence of the Greeks of Asia Minor and, in a pan-Hellenic spirit, to push out the Persians (Xen. Hell. 3.4.2–6). From 396 BCE onward, the Spartan king Agesilaus II himself appeared at the battlefield in Asia Minor where he launched several campaigns into the interior through 394 BCE. The Persians, in turn, were able to win over the Athenian Conon as an adept commander for their fleet and to finance a coalition in Greece – comprised of Argos, Athens, Thebes, and Corinth – that effectively pulled Sparta into the Corinthian War (395–387 BCE). In 394 BCE, Conon was able to destroy the Spartan fleet with Persian ships at the Battle of Cnidus, forcing the Spartans to retreat out of Asia Minor (Cartledge 1987; Briant 2002: pp. 637–645; Buckler 2003). The so-called “King’s Peace” (Peace of Antalcidas), which the Persians had negotiated between Sparta and its opponents in 387/86 BCE, ended the ongoing battle to fill the power vacuum left behind by the Delian League following the Athenian defeat suffered at the hands of Sparta in 404 BCE. This treaty secured Persian possession of the Greek cities in Asia Minor, as well as the islands of Klazomenai and Cyprus. The remaining Greek settlements, apart from those in Athenian possession (Lemnos, Imbros, and Skyros), were to stay independent (Xen. Hell. 5.1.31). Ultimately, the Achaemenids successfully managed to keep hold of the position that they had won in Asia Minor in the second half of the sixth century BCE. At the same time, they also proved to be an indispensable factor affecting the politics of the Greek polities that continued to remain independent.

Despite the agreements that were made in the King’s Peace, the Persians remained the archenemy in the eyes of the Greeks. The Greek *poleis* in Asia Minor were considered to be oppressed polities whose liberation had been styled into matter of pan-Hellenic interest. At the same time, the Greeks wanted to exact revenge for the destruction that had occurred over the course of Xerxes’ campaigns. These kinds of ideologemes that were propagated by prominent intellectuals such as the Athenian Isocrates, however, did not have the power to put an end to the lively exchange taking place between Greeks and Persians. In the end, it was left to the Macedonian King Philipp II to dare to launch the long-desired great march against the Persians, but it was ultimately his son, Alexander, who finally carried through on this promise.

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FURTHER READING

For an excellent overview of the problem of the available sources and the scholarly tradition that grew out of the Greek sources, see Wieshöfer (2009, with additional literature). The standard reference for the history of Asia Minor in antiquity is now Marek (2010), and for the fourth century BCE, Debord (1999). The main reference work on the emergence, establishment, and organization of Persian rule over the Greek city-states is Briant (2002); Balcer (1995) and Boardman

et al. (1988) also provide good overviews, while a comprehensive, problem-oriented account can be found in Cawkwell (2005).

The seminal works on the Ionian Revolt are the studies by Tozzi (1978), Murray (1988), Walter (1993), and Georges (2000). The best overview of the reforms of Darius I can be found in Briant (2002). Very good accounts of the Greco-Persian Wars 490–479 BCE have been published by Balcer (1995), Lazenby (1993; predominantly military history), and Welwei (2011).

The history of the fifth century BCE and the Delian League has been dealt with by Hornblower (2011) and Welwei (1999 and 2011); for a focus on the Ionians in the fifth century BCE, see Heinrichs (1989). To get a good start for the fourth century BCE, refer to Cartledge (1987), Debord (1999), Buckler (2003), and Tiersch (2016).

CHAPTER 46

Macedonia

Michael Zahrnt

Without the work of Herodotus we would know hardly anything about Macedonia under Persian rule (cf. Zahrnt 2011 on Herodotus and the Macedonian kings). Even the answer to the question as to whether this rule lasted for more than three decades or for only about 13 years depends on our interpretation of Herodotus' story of the first encounter between the two kingdoms (5.17–21).

According to this author, King Darius, after his unsuccessful campaign against the Scythians (c. 513/12 BCE), had left the general Megabazus with allegedly 80 000 soldiers on European soil (4.143–144). Megabazus had marched along the Thracian south coast and subjugated all cities and tribes in that area (5.1–2, 10); at the close of his campaign he had conquered the Paeonians, who lived around the lower Strymon and had deported some of their tribes to Asia Minor (5.14–15). From the Strymon valley Megabazus had sent an embassy to Macedonia to demand the submission of king Amyntas. Incidentally, in those days the kingdom of Macedonia with its capital at modern Vergina was still relatively small; with the districts of Pieria and Bottiaea it consisted of the coastal area around the Thermaic Gulf, which at that time extended far to the west into the interior, and reached in the south to the mouth of the Peneus and in the north probably already to the Axios.

The Macedonian king gave the Persian envoys earth and water, the tokens of submission under the king, and invited them to a banquet. After the dinner the Persians insisted on the presence of the female members of the court and very soon began to act improperly toward them, whereupon Alexander,

Amyntas' son, asked his father to go to bed and sent the ladies away – allegedly to make their toilet; instead of them he brought into the banquet-hall young men in disguise, who killed the Persians at their first overtures. Also the entourage, the coaches, and all the equipment were eliminated. When a little later the Persians searched for their embassy which seemed to have disappeared completely from the earth, Alexander managed to appease them by giving a lot of money to the search party and his sister Gygaea in marriage to their leader, Bubares. In the winter of 480/79 BCE Amyntas, the son of Bubares and Gygaea, is mentioned as the ruler of a town in Asia Minor (Hdt. 8.136.1), so that we can date the marriage to the last decade of the sixth century BCE.

The story of the murder of the envoys is typically Herodotean and at the same time highly suspect. Today most scholars consider it as a later fabrication;¹ without any doubt the story was put about after the Persians' defeat at Plataea and their retreat from Europe, and it was meant to put a different gloss on the period, when Alexander I, who in later years wanted to be regarded as a friend and patron of the Greeks, was in reality a subject of the Persian king and obliged to fight under his command. In fact, Alexander was able to disguise, at least partly, the extent to which he had supported Xerxes during his campaign against Greece, and his story of the murder of the Persian envoys found credence with Herodotus. In addition, Alexander had to offer an exonerating explanation of the marriage of his sister to a member of the Persian ruling class. This marriage could have come about only if at the same time Macedonia had been made dependent on the Persian king. In this context it is irrelevant whether the Macedonian king had become a vassal, as many scholars believe, or whether he had been made a subject who had to pay tribute to the king.² Recently, however, not only the historicity of the assassination of the envoys has been contested but also the inference that it was meant to conceal submission to the supremacy of the king; both the submission and the marriage of Bubares and Gygaea are said to have happened about 20 years later as a result of Mardonius' campaign (to be dealt with in due course).³ The account of Herodotus does not render this suggestion plausible (nor does it unambiguously prove the opposite); there is also the question as to why an act of submission which had never been carried out should be concealed. In addition, what is the point of putting about a story that was meant to render something undone which allegedly had never happened? Therefore with the majority of scholars we should allow Macedonia's dependence on the king to begin in about 510 BCE.

Obviously Amyntas could profit from the partial deportation and ensuing weakening of the Paeonians and extend his territory across the Axios into the plain of modern Thessaloniki and as far as the ridges of the Chortiatis.⁴ After his second expulsion from Athens the tyrant Pisistratus had spent some time in the neighborhood of this area, and when his son, Hippias, had to leave his

country as well, Amyntas offered him the district of Anthemus which lay southeast of Thessaloniki (Hdt. 5.94.1). A few years later Amyntas died and his son, Alexander, ascended to the throne. Immediately after his account of the assassination of the Persian envoys, Hdt. 5.22 tells us that Alexander wanted to compete in the Olympic Games, was admitted only after he had proved his Hellenic descent, took part in the furlong race, and ran a dead heat for first place (whatever that means). The event is undated, and scholars vacillate in placing it between 508 and 476 BCE, but as a sprinter Alexander might have had his best chances in 496 BCE, and historical considerations point to his appearance in Olympia occurring in this year (Zahrnt 2011: p. 766).

Alexander's admission to one of the Greek national games, particularly as the first representative of his country, is at the same time an indication that in those years the Macedonians had slipped out of the king's grasp. This was a by-product of the Ionian Revolt (see Chapter 45 The Greek World), which was not confined to the west coast of Asia Minor and Cyprus but had also interrupted contact with the Persian vassals and subjects on the Balkan peninsula.⁵ Actually the hints in Herodotus' work of a temporary weakening or even collapse of the Persian rule concern only the Thracian area. In the case of Macedonia, our author could not have spoken at all about an end of the Persian overlordship since, owing to the alleged assassination of the Persian envoys, the Macedonians could never have become subjects of the king.

In fact, the Macedonians might only have made the most of the difficulties of the Persians but had not openly offered opposition to the king. So Alexander kept his throne when in 492 BCE Darius sent his son-in-law, Mardonius, to reconquer those territories on European soil which had been lost during the Ionian Revolt (Hdt. 6.43–45). As far as Macedonia is concerned, we are told only that the Persian "land army added the Macedonians to the slaves that they had already" and that by night the Thracian Brygi attacked the Persians who encamped in Macedonia, killing many soldiers and even wounding the general, but that Mardonius did not depart before he had also subjugated the Brygi. Neither can we identify and locate these Brygi, nor do we know where the attack occurred and how far Mardonius had marched into Macedonia. Herodotus eventually stresses the huge losses which the Brygi had inflicted on the army and which the fleet had suffered when it was shipwrecked at the Athos. According to him, the campaign was a total failure, yet at the beginning of book seven he has the same Mardonius speaking about his successful advance up to Macedonia.⁶

Herodotus' report does not indicate whether and to what extent the status of Macedonia had changed in comparison with what it was at the time of Amyntas.⁷ Of course, this question is irrelevant for those scholars who claim that both the Persian rule of Macedonia, however it was organized, and the marriage between Bubares and Gygaia began only with the expedition of

Mardonius.⁸ Things are different, if Amyntas had already given the Persians earth and water and Mardonius had reconquered the kingdom. In this case many scholars assume that this expedition had just restored the subservience of Macedonia or do not say anything about the character of the Persian sovereignty.⁹ Some scholars even believe that the Persian rule was tightened but cannot say what it now looked like.¹⁰ This is not surprising: Herodotus, the only author who speaks about Mardonius' expedition and its consequences, does not give any details, and relevant Achaemenid evidence does not exist. Even the name of these vassals or subjects is disputed. The Yaunā takabarā which, beginning with the tomb of Darius, are found in reliefs or inscriptions are sometimes – with more or less confidence – identified with the Macedonians.¹¹ Recently, however, Rollinger (2006) has convincingly shown that this assumption is highly dubious. Even an unambiguous identification of the Yaunā takabarā would not help us, since it is well known that these sources record not satrapies but conquered peoples whom the king wished to name specifically (Sancisi-Weerdenburg 2001: p. 331). No Persian satrap residing in Macedonia is attested; rather, the land was ruled by its kings, first by Amyntas, later by Alexander, who had obviously surrendered voluntarily to Mardonius.¹² In contrast to the Thracian coastal area there seem to have been no Persian garrisons on Macedonian soil. Such military bases might even have been unnecessary as long as the Macedonian king guaranteed the safety of Persian rule in the area around the Thermaic Gulf, whereas Thrace was split up into numerous tribes and did not possess a central authority. While in Thrace the crossings of the rivers Hebrus and Strymon were safeguarded by the Persian garrisons of Doriscus and Eion, in Macedonia it was the king who had firm control of the mouth of the Axios. This was very important for the Persian king, as became evident during Xerxes' invasion of Greece and its preliminaries.

This event, which has been described by Herodotus in great detail (three out of nine books) and dealt with by many scholars, was at the same time the last act of Persian rule in Macedonia. During the course of the preparations for this operation, supply camps were set up along the route of the planned advance, some among them in Macedonia itself (7.25.2); unlike in Thrace, Herodotus mentions no specific names for camps in Macedonia, but one of them should have been in Therme (in the area of modern Thessaloniki). Here, on instructions from Xerxes, the Persian fleet which had been sent around the Chalcidic peninsula and the land army which had marched through the interior were to meet and remain encamped until their southward departure.

The Macedonian king is not mentioned in this context but had already been active in the interest of his master (Hdt. 7.172–175.1; cf. Robertson 1976). Representatives of those Greek states which were determined to ward off the Persian attack had met on the isthmus of Corinth and decided to take up an

advanced position north of the Peneus and had dispatched troops. Some days after their arrival messengers came from Alexander and, emphasizing the immense size of the Persian army and the huge number of enemy ships, counseled them to depart. The Greeks believed that the advice was good and that the king meant well toward them and withdrew. Alexander could present himself as an honest friend of the Greeks, perhaps already in the estimation of the dispatched Greeks, in any case later in Herodotus' eyes. In fact, he had eased his sovereign's march to the south and at the same time made sure that the Persian army, to whose supply he certainly had to contribute, did not stay in his country any longer than was absolutely necessary.

When the Persian army moved off from Therme to the south it was accompanied by Macedonian soldiers (Hdt. 7.185.2); however, during the fighting of 480 BCE neither Alexander nor his Macedonians are mentioned.¹³ When, after the defeat at Salamis, Xerxes hastily returned by land to the Hellespont, he left behind the sick soldiers in Thessaly, Macedonia, and Paeonian Siris (Hdt. 8.115.1; 3). During the following winter Mardonius, who was now in supreme command, billeted his troops in Thessaly and Macedonia (Hdt. 8.126.2).

From here Mardonius sent Alexander with tempting offers to Athens in order to induce the Athenians to change sides. According to Herodotus, the Macedonian king was chosen for this job because the marriage of his sister, Gygaia, had made him a relative of the Persians and because at the same time he was a proxenos of the Athenians and had been honored by them as a benefactor (*energetes*: Hdt. 8.136.1). Many scholars attribute the granting of these titles to the fact that Alexander had supplied the Athenians with the timber which they had needed in the second half of the 480s BCE for the construction of their new fleet. I have my doubts. Why should Alexander have put at risk his position as a privileged vassal by sending material for the reinforcement of the navy into an area which was still rebellious? In addition, these exports could not have been kept secret, since in these years Alexander's brother-in-law, Bubares, supervised the digging of the canal through the neck of the Athos peninsula (Hdt. 7.22.2). Either Alexander had inherited the title of proxenos from his father, who had been a friend of the Athenian tyrants, or it had been awarded to him by the Athenians after the end of Xerxes' invasion. The way Herodotus has him speak at Athens shows clearly that he was not a close friend of the Athenians; in fact, in view of his position as a subject of the king and the presence of Persian troops in his country, he had no choice but to fulfill his task according to the interests of his overlord.

Alexander's last appearance in Herodotus' *Histories* occurs the night before the battle of Plataea (9.44–46.1). According to our author, he rode up to the camp of the Athenians and told the generals under the seal of secrecy that he was by ancient descent a Greek and did not want to see the Greeks change

their freedom for slavery. Although the sacrifices had been unfavorable, Mardonius had decided to attack at dawn. In case of the hoped victory, the Greeks should not forget that they also owed their liberation to him who had undertaken this dangerous ride for the sake of the Greeks and had protected them from being attacked unexpectedly by the barbarians. Then he disappeared in the darkness of the night. This story again is typically Herodotean and its validity cannot be checked. But this does not entitle us to accept it as true, as some scholars do.¹⁴ There is also the question as to what service the Macedonian king could actually have performed for the Greeks, who in fact eagerly wished that the Persians would begin the battle of their own accord and who certainly could not have been surprised by an unforeseen attack.

Herodotus' report clearly shows that on the one hand Alexander was indeed a loyal subject and supporter of the king in his campaign against the Greeks. On the other hand, after the war he could disseminate the version which found credence at least with Herodotus that deep in his heart he had really supported the Greeks. In contrast, we have contemporary evidence in the form of tetrobols of the Macedonian king which are dated around 480 BCE and can be connected with Xerxes' invasion and its preparations (Heinrichs and Müller 2008). On the obverse, these coins show a Macedonian horseman with a short sword which has convincingly been identified as an *akinakes*; this was one of the most outstanding decorations the king could award and attested the superior position of the recipient and his proximity to the Achaemenid dynasty. For contemporaries there could be no doubt that the Macedonian king was a faithful and highly decorated subject and assistant of his master.

It is therefore not astonishing that after his alleged night ride in the plain of Plataea, the Macedonian king does not turn up again in Herodotus' work. Not until two speeches in the Corpus Demosthenicum do we read that the king who was reigning in Macedonia at the time of the Persian invasion had destroyed the Persians on their retreat from Plataea and had completed the defeat of the king, and some years later king Philip of Macedon wrote to the Athenians, saying that his ancestor Alexander had, well before the Athenians, occupied the site of the later Amphipolis "and, as the first-fruits of the Persian captives taken there, set up a golden statue at Delphi."¹⁵ The statue is unambiguously historical and its existence and location near the big altar are attested by Herodotus (8.121.2). But this author does not know anything about an attack on the retreating Persians, although in this way the king could have proved his alleged sympathies for the Greeks. So we must assume that the dedication in Delphi was made later, and in another context, and was only in the fourth century BCE connected with Xerxes' invasion,¹⁶ perhaps under the influence of Herodotus' portrait of a friend of the Greeks sitting on the Macedonian throne. This portrait was lasting and was eventually responsible for the fact that in order to distinguish between the Alexander who had

cooperated with the Persians and the Alexander who had successfully fought against them and was later called “the Great,” the first-named of the two was given the epithet “Philhellene.”¹⁷ Hardly ever has a collaborator been so successfully rehabilitated.

NOTES

- 1 It will be sufficient to present a small selection from the past nine decades: Geyer (1930: p. 42), Castritius (1972: pp. 2–3), Errington (1981: pp. 140–143), Errington (1986: pp. 20–21), Rosen (1987: p. 31), Borza (1990: pp. 102, 112), Erbse (1992: pp. 102–104), Zahrnt (1992: p. 246), Badian (1994: pp. 113–114, 127), Sieberer (1995: pp. 258–261), Bichler (2000: pp. 299–300), Gschnitzer (2001: pp. 92–93, 94), and Scott (2005: p. 189).
- 2 Amyntas was a vassal according to e.g. Geyer (1930: p. 42), Edson (1970: p. 25), Castritius (1972: pp. 2–3), Balcer (1988: pp. 4–5), Briant (1996: p. 157), Scott (2005: p. 189), Heinrichs and Müller (2008), Olbrycht (2010: p. 343), and Mari (2011: p. 85), while in the opinion of Hammond (1979: pp. 58–59) the Macedonians had become “subjects of Persia” and Bubares was “effectively in charge of Macedonia”; on p. 60 he describes him as “governor or advisor to the governor of the satrapy.”
- 3 For the first time by Errington (1981: pp. 139–143), who was followed among others by Borza (1990: pp. 102–105), Erbse (1992: pp. 99–104), and Sieberer (1995: pp. 258–260).
- 4 Cf. on the seizure of the land along the western bank of the Axios and on the advance as far as the plain of Thessaloniki Hammond (1979: p. 59), Zahrnt (1984: pp. 342–344, 358–361), and Errington (1986: pp. 17–18).
- 5 While most scholars from Geyer (1930: p. 43) to Sprawski (2010: p. 135) think that the Macedonians had thrown off the Persian rule, or at least taken advantage of the situation in Thrace, some like Hammond (1979: p. 60, cp. 99) assert that “the Thracians and the Macedones made no move.”
- 6 Hdt. 7.9 a 2. b 2; cf. also 7.108.1, that Megabazus and later Mardonius had subjugated the whole country up to Thessaly. Cf. on Mardonius’ expedition and its objective Zahrnt (1992: pp. 238–244), Briant (1996: p. 169), and Scott (2005: pp. 185–191; 197–203).
- 7 For general ideas about the status of Macedonia under Persian rule cf. recently Briant (1996: p. 169), Scott (2005: pp. 189–190, 198), Tripodi (2007: pp. 76–77, 83–85), Sarakinski (2010: pp. 104–105), and Sprawski (2010: pp. 137–138).

- 8 Cf. above note 4; also Briant (1996: p. 157), and Sprawski (2010: pp. 136–137), do not rule out the possibility that the conquest of Macedonia and the marriage are to be connected only with the expedition of Mardonius.
- 9 So e.g. Rosen (1987: pp. 30–31), who, however, connects the marriage with the expedition of Mardonius; Badian (1996: p. 116) and Olbrycht (2010: p. 344).
- 10 So e.g. Castritius (1972: p. 11), Balcer (1988: pp. 6. 13), and Archibald (1998: pp. 83–84).
- 11 E.g. Archibald (1998: pp. 83–84), Sancisi-Weerdenburg (2001: p. 329), Olbrycht (2010: pp. 343–344), and Sarakinski (2010: pp. 101–103).
- 12 Cf. e.g. Edson (1970: p. 25), Heinrichs and Müller (2008: pp. 289–291), and Sarakinski (2010: pp. 104–105).
- 13 Macedonians appear only in Boeotia, having been sent on ahead by Alexander in order to safeguard the cities and to show to Xerxes that the Boeotians were on the Persian side (Hdt. 8.34).
- 14 Cf. e.g. Geyer (1930: p. 45), Edson (1970: p. 26), Erbse (1992: p. 101), Badian (1996: pp. 109–118), and Bowie (2007: p. 224).
- 15 Dem. 23.200; [Dem.] 13.24 (in both cases the king is erroneously called Perdiccas); 12.21.
- 16 Cf. Hammond (1979: pp. 101–102), who correctly emphasizes that Alexander’s “forces would have been entirely adequate for the purpose” and who dates the temporary occupation of Ennea Hodoi to the years between 478 and 476/5 BCE; whereas Mari (2002: pp. 37–39) speaks of a fiction, which is to be dated into the fourth century BCE; cf. also Sprawski (2010: pp. 139–140).
- 17 According to Hammond (1979: p. 101 note 3): “it was a characteristic of the Hellenistic period to add an epithet to homonymous kings”; cf. Errington (1986: p. 21) and Sprawski (2010: p. 143); it is first attested in Dio Chrys. 2.33.

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CHAPTER 47

Thrace

Dilyana Boteva-Boyanova

So far, indisputable Persian evidence of Achaemenid rule in European Thrace is missing. Despite the attempts at identifying the “Skudrians” in the royal lists of peoples/countries and in the Fortification texts as Thracians (Szemerényi 1980: p. 26; Tatscheva 1992; Balcer 1995: p. 121; Briant 2002: p. 176) or “mainly Thracians” (Fol and Hammond 1988: p. 247), their ethnic identity remains “a thorny problem” (Henkelmann and Stolper 2009: p. 288). Scholarship has produced several further identifications – Thracians and Macedonians (Kent 1943: p. 306¹), Paeonians (Pajakowski 1983: pp. 252–253), and others² – none of which has clarified the issue satisfactorily. The “Skudrian question” becomes even more complicated when Achaemenid reliefs are taken into consideration because “the representatives of Skudra (or those we have identified as such) do not always correspond with each other” (Sarakinski 2010: p. 100). Clearly, for indisputable Persian evidence on Achaemenid rule in Thrace, historians depend on future archeological finds and epigraphic studies.

In the meantime the issue could be treated following Greek (Thucydides 1.98; 1.128; Diodorus 11.44; 11.60; Plutarch, Cimon; Pausanias 3.4; 8.8) and to a lesser extent Roman (Cornelius Nepos) authors. Among them Herodotus is of course the main source: with his reports at hand, often contradictory ideas have been reasoned in modern literature (e.g. Tuplin 2003: pp. 390–391). Due to the limited space, it is impossible to present here the different views with all the pros and cons. However, according to the classical sources, several stages of Persian rule in Thrace seem to be recognizable, though they are defined differently (e.g. Balcer 1988: pp. 8–15 and Vasilev 2015).

Achievements in European Thrace Predating Darius' Scythian Campaign

Evidence suggests Persian overseas military activity prior to this expedition. It resulted in establishing relations with Miltiades the Younger, “a strategos and tyrant” of Thracian Chersonese, and Metrodoros, the tyrant of Prokonnesos, who participated in Darius’ undertaking. Probably c. 515 BCE the European coast of the Hellespont with its hinterland was taken under Persian control by Megabazus, being “strategos of the Hellespontian land (see however Tzvetkova 2008, pp. 292–294).”³

Darius' Scythian Campaign (513/12 BCE)

The Thracians of Salmydessos, the Scyrmiadae, and the Nipseans gave themselves up to the Great King without any struggle. The first people subdued by Darius in Europe despite their resistance were the Getae. Marching northwards the king may well have followed a route lying at a distance of approximately two days’ travel from the coast. Some detours were to be expected due either to the terrain or for strategic reasons. On his way back from the Trans-Danubian region, Darius appointed Megabazus as “strategos of Europe” (controlling not only the Hellespontian coast but also the newly subdued peoples “in Europe”) and ordered him to subject Thrace.

Megabazus' Undertakings in Thrace (c. 512–499 BCE)

He subjugated “every city and every tribe of those who lived there” (Hdt. 5.2.2), reaching the Paeonian territory in the Strymon valley. This enterprise witnessed the deportation of several Paeonian tribes’ “men, women and children” into Asia (Hdt. 5.14–15) and Histiaeus, the tyrant of Miletus, being rewarded by Darius with Myrcinos in southwestern Thrace (Delev 2007). After securing the coast and deporting the Paeonians, Megabazus arranged relations with neighbors inland. In my opinion, this was the time when relations between the Achaemenid Empire and the Odrysian kingdom in the middle Hebros valley were settled. Probably it happened, as with Amyntas’ Macedonia, by sending a Persian embassy which demanded and possibly received “earth and water”. Megabazus’ success in subduing further Thracian territories resulted in a new office, “strategos of Thrace”.

The Ionian Revolt (499–493 BCE)

The Ionian Revolt enabled Thrace to throw off Achaemenid domination. The southwestern Thracian “corner” was freed from Persian control, enabling Aristagoras to take flight to Myrcinos (Zahrnt 1992: pp. 250–252). The Royal Fort of Doriskos at the mouth of the Hebros was used by the deported Paonians as a stopover when fleeing homeward. In 493 BCE the Persian fleet had to reconquer “the Chersonese, Perinthos and the forts that lie toward Thrace, Selymbria, and Byzantion”, which indicates the scale of the Persian territorial losses. Probably the Getae also escaped from Achaemenid rule within this period.

A New Persian Offensive (493–490 BCE) and the Consequences of Marathon

The suppression of the revolt was followed by reconquering the Hellespont and a new military campaign westward, initially marshaled by Mardonius (Zahrnt 1992). While marching from the Hellespont “through Europe”, he obviously regained the Aegean cities and the Thracian tribes as far as Macedonia. Subdued also were the Thasians, the Macedonians, and “the Brygi of Thrace,” who attacked the Persian camp in Macedonia. The Thasians were ordered by Darius to destroy their walls and bring their ships to Abdera because of a false accusation that they were planning rebellion. While Persian heralds were demanding earth and water throughout Hellas, the king’s tributary coastal cities were commanded to build warships and transports for the horses for the planned invasion of Greece. The Achaemenid rule in Thrace probably remained unharmed by the disaster of Mardonius’ fleet near Mount Athos; it is very unlikely the same is true of the Battle of Marathon. If Xerxes, in 480 BCE, in his measurements differentiated between the areas east and west of the Strymon river, it was probably because he expected a threat from the latter (Kienast 1996: pp. 308–309); it could mean that the Thracian tribes between Strymon and the Thermaic Gulf started causing problems for the Persians in the years postdating Marathon.

Xerxes’ Expedition Against Greece: Preparation, Start, and Failure, Followed by Persian Retreat (484/3–478 BCE)

The Athos Canal was dug and bridges were constructed; an exploration spotted four places in Thrace where “provisions were carried from all parts of Asia.” Hotly disputed is the route followed by the three columns of Xerxes’

army after its departure from Doriskos. Probably Xerxes – with his column marching expectedly in the middle – followed a route which coincided generally with the modern road Komotini – Xanthi – Drama – Serres. The defeat at Salamis late in September 480 BCE was followed by the king’s speedy journey back to the Hellespont, charging cities and people to nourish the Persians. Several poleis in Thrace, including Potidaea and Olynthos, started an unsuccessful revolt. Disobedience was manifested also by the Paeonians of Siris and the Thracians at the Strymon headwaters (they dared to keep “the sacred chariot of Zeus,” even though Xerxes demanded it back): only on reaching Abdera was the king supposed to be safe. At Plataea, Thracians and Paeonians were still part of the Persian infantry. Following the defeat in the battle that took place there, Artabazus fled through Thrace using the shortest inland road, where “many of his army had been cut down by the Thracians” (Hdt. 9.89). In 479/8 BCE the Athenian general Xanthippus attacked Sestos and overcame the Achaemenid troops gathered there from all parts of the Chersonese; shortly afterward the Lacedaemonian general Pausanias took Byzantion from the Persians (478 BCE).

Persia and Thrace after the Founding of the Delian League (c. 477–c. 465 BCE)

The defeats of the Persians at Plataea and Mykale resulted in a Greek offensive (479/8 BCE), which gained an organizational basis with the foundation of a new institution in the Aegean – the Delian League. In Thrace, having the support of local collaborators, the Persian occupation was centered in a few strategic sites: Eion at the mouth of the Strymon (captured by Cimon in 477/6 or 476/5 BCE) and Doriskos at the mouth of the Hebros (several failed attempts to capture it are reported). In 465 BCE Persian forces are attested in the Chersonese but were driven out by Cimon. Indisputable indications of Persian rule in Thrace end here; the connections, however, continued as hinted at by numismatic finds.

Reliable and relevant evidence about whether Thrace was administrated as a satrapy or in another way is missing. Persian governors are attested in different fortresses (Mascames in Doriskos) and poleis (Ariston in Byzantion, Artayktes in Sestos, and Boges in Eion). Megabazus, however, was a strategos of a larger area with a gradually increasing territory, not necessarily organized as a satrapy.

Persian military expeditions in Thrace led to huge preparatory works, including impressive enterprises: bridging the Bosphorus and the Hellespont as well as digging the Athos Canal. The latter was accomplished by soldiers (allegedly compelled by whippings to dig) and by the inhabitants of Athos. The inland infrastructure in Thrace was considerably improved: the banks of

the Danube and Strymon (and probably other rivers) were joined by bridges; roads were cleared so that the troops might reach their destinations. Concerning the road “along which Xerxes led his army,” it is explicitly reported that “the Thracians neither break it up nor sow, but they hold it in great reverence” (Hdt. 7.115.3).

While on military campaign, the king compelled cities and tribes he encountered to feed the army and to follow it. Xerxes forced the coastal dwellers to join him on board ship and those living inland to join the infantry. During the Scythian campaign the Getae followed Darius after being subdued. We are not told whether the same happened to the Thracians who gave themselves up without any struggle, but it seems very likely. According to the classical sources, the army was organized in nations, each with its native leaders, who were participating “as slaves,” i.e. under compulsion. In Thrace, some local rulers tried to keep their independence. The king of the Bisaltae and the Crestonian country refused to submit and fled to the Rhodope mountains; his six sons, however, followed the Persian army, for which they were later severely punished by their father.

The subjected cities and nations were obliged to pay taxes as well, among them a tax on crops, which the Thasians were not paying for unknown reasons (their case is even more interesting because they were allowed to keep significant revenues from their goldmines). Shipbuilding was probably the way in which the tributary cities of the coast were paying their taxes (see Chapter 67 Taxes and Tribute).

From an economical point of view, Thrace turned for a while into a focal point of intensive trade and storing of provisions. Apart from the food supplies, transported by camels and mules, we are told about “robes” of Egyptian papyrus and Phoenician flax as raw materials for the bridges; for the people digging the canal, ground grain was frequently delivered to Athos. In this connection Herodotus mentions a meadow at the site turned into a meeting place and market. Briant (2002: p. 455) insists “that the workers purchased their rations. Perhaps they received a salary (in whatever form, silver or tokens), which they hastened to spend in the military warehouses!” Doubtless, this immense construction could have been a factor in minting the much-disputed coins of the so-called “Thraco-Macedonian tribes” (Tacheva 1992).

Several archeological finds from the Thracian lands, the silver gilt amphora from Duvanlij (Filow 1934) being the most spectacular, are similar to items or representations known from Achaemenid Persia. They are assessed differently with regard to characteristics that allow us to distinguish between original Achaemenid products, produced under Achaemenid influence in Asia Minor and imported in Thrace, and products of Thracian craftsmen influenced by royal Achaemenid art. No clue to this puzzle has been universally accepted so far (cf. Chapter 98 “Perserie”).

NOTES

- 1 Kent (1943: pp. 305–306) hesitates as to whether Skudra denotes “Thrace and Macedonia, or a part of that territory” having in mind Macedonia as indicated in his Table 3.
- 2 Some of them are summarized by Pajakowski (1983), Henkelmann and Stolper (2009), and Sarakinski (2010).
- 3 Most of the ideas presented in this very brief text are reasoned thoroughly in Boteva (2011).

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CHAPTER 48

The Northern Black Sea

Gocha R. Tsetskhladze

Atossa, wife of Darius, encouraged him to achieve fame through his actions and to a course of action he was already considering: conquering the Scythians (Hdt. 3.134). As we know, primarily from Herodotus (4.83–144), Darius undertook such a campaign not just to punish the Scythians for past behavior (Hdt. 4.1): it was the Persians entering into Europe, even a conflict between the continents of Asia and Europe, a portent of which could be found in one of Cyrus' dreams (Hdt. 1.209).

Much had been written about this expedition in the past.¹ Herodotus has been studied so thoroughly that, for want of other evidence, there seemed to be nothing to add. Tuplin (2010) revisited the problem, and Hind (2011) reassessed Herodotus' information on Scythia in general, concentrating on Darius' invasion.²

We need to know whether Darius actually campaigned across the Danube; if so, how far and with what success; the scale of his achievement in Cisdanubia; and his motives (Tuplin 2010: p. 281). Nigh impossible. Problems with Herodotus' account have long been acknowledged. His Scythian *logos* overall appears chaotic and contradictory, his grasp of hydrography and distances deficient, likewise his geography of the peoples living in the vast Ukrainian steppes (Asheri et al. 2007: pp. 558–565; Tuplin 2010: pp. 283–288; Hind 2011). Doubtless his sources for Darius' expedition were scarce, probably biased, and his account needs must conform to some of the basic principles underlying all his historiography (Asheri et al. 2007: p. 564). Moreover, Book 4 of *Histories* is not just about Scythians; it is a broad account of the steppe

zone, Eurasia, and the conflict between local peoples and the dominant power of “Upper Asia,” the Medes, and Persians (Hind 2011: p. 93); and he was writing about events of 50 years past. We still debate whether he went to the Black Sea or not. He was a Greek author, critical of the Persians. We know not whether the Scythian débâcle was as serious for Darius as Herodotus alleges: “In our terms of truth and falsehood, we may at best be invited to accept a narrative as ‘poetically’ true” (Tuplin 2010: p. 303).

Clearly, Darius’ expedition took place (Hartog 1988). Our problems lie with its extent, importance for both sides, and details. Two other ancient authors, Ctesias (*Persica* F13.21) and Strabo (7.3.14), give very brief accounts: Darius with 800 000 men bridged the Bosphorus and Ister, entered Scythia, advancing for 15 days, was defeated, fled, crossed the bridges again and broke them down before his whole army had crossed, leaving 80 000 in Europe to die (Ctesias); he crossed the Ister to attack the Scythians, got stuck in the Desert of the Getae, and, facing death, “army and all,” belatedly turned back (Strabo).

Maybe these accounts, lacking detail, demonstrate that the campaign and its consequences were less monumental? What evidence is there about the consequences for Scythia and the Greek cities of the campaign, despite its failure? We do not know how trustworthy Ctesias is (as with Herodotus), but he may have been at the Achaemenid court, allowing him some access to firsthand information, notwithstanding the lapse in time since the events he describes and the fragmentary survival of his writings. Darius ordered Ariaramnes, satrap of Cappadocia, to cross over to Scythia and to take prisoners; he did so “with thirty 50-oared ships...” (Ctesias, *Persica* F13.20), in what some consider an actual event in c. 519 BCE, regarded as a precursor of/preparation for Darius’ Scythian campaign of c. 513 BCE (Koshelenko 1999; Nieling 2010: pp. 127–128). The only maritime route to Scythia was through the Cimmerian Bosphorus: Archaic-period nomadic Scythia was concentrated territorially on the steppes of the northern Caucasus, where Scythian tombs of this period, including Kelermes, are located. Scythians did not migrate to the northern Black Sea steppe lands until the early/middle fifth century BCE.³ In labeling the inhabitants of the Ukrainian steppes “Scythians,” we are seeing them through Herodotus’ eyes. Often we forget that he himself (4.6) remarks that this name was a Greek coinage – and that he lists individual tribes in this assemblage (Hdt. 4.6, 16–31, 46–47).⁴ As archeological material demonstrates, the settlements of the eighth to sixth centuries BCE on the Ukrainian steppe, often considered “Scythian,” have nothing to do with the Scythians, at this stage nomads, not sedentary, but with a people of eastern Halstatt origin (Kashuba and Levitskii 2012; Vakhtina and Kashuba 2012). Some characteristics of these eighth- to sixth-century settlements, tribal political centers, demonstrate how substantial they were and how difficult for Darius’

troops to have passed them by without severe difficulties. Nemirov, 110 ha, had 8 m ramparts and an acropolis of 12.5 ha; Motroninskoe was over 200 ha, a third of it enclosed within fortifications of earthen ramparts 10.5 m high and a ditch 4–6 m deep and 10–15 m across, and outside the fortifications, three cemeteries containing 60 tumuli; Trakhtemirov, 500 ha, was defended by earthen ramparts, ditches, and a wooden fortification. The largest, Belsk (4020 ha),⁵ had a defensive perimeter of 25 km, 4000–5000 inhabitants, ramparts 9 m high, and ditches more than 5 m deep. The site included three smaller settlements, each fortified, and nine other populated places (Tsetskhladze 2012: pp. 339–340 with bibliography).

Ctesias, writing about Ninos, king of the Assyrians, states that he had a strong desire to subdue the whole of Asia from the Tanais to the Nile and spent 17 years achieving this. Among the lands he supposedly conquered were “the barbarian tribes who live on the Black Sea coast as far as the River Tanais” (Ctesias, *Persica* F1b 2.1–3). The territories described are practically the same as those mentioned in Persian royal inscriptions. Maybe there is some confusion and the deeds are those of Darius? Tellingly, this passage survives only via Diodorus (2.1.4–28.7), a writer well known for confusing detail (see below).

Some confirmation of Ctesias’ information comes from Herodotus – that during Darius’ expedition the Persian army followed the Scythians all the way along the coast of Lake Maeotis and even across the Tanais (Hdt. 4.120–122) – and it is logical to propose that the Greek cities of the Cimmerian Bosphorus, mainly founded by Ionians,⁶ fell under Persian sway. This finds direct or indirect support in other sources.

Some archeological evidence requires an explanation from an historical perspective, however difficult: in the last third of the sixth century BCE, the Greek settlement at modern Taganrog in the far northeast of the Sea of Azov ceased to exist; in the middle/last quarter of that century we find traces of fire in Greek cities of the Cimmerian Bosphorus – Kepoi, Myrmekion, and Porthmeus. The last two have also revealed fortification walls of the middle/second half of the sixth century. Some interpret these as evidence of worsening relations with the Scythians (Tsetskhladze 2013: p. 208 with bibliography), but there were no Scythians in the Cimmerian Bosphorus (Taman and Kerch peninsulas) until the middle/second half of the fifth century BCE (Tsetskhladze 2013: p. 208 with bibliography). The dating, however, is largely consistent with Ariaramnes’ campaign. We can assume that the Greek cities did not welcome the Persian embrace and resisted hotly, though unsuccessfully. This may seem speculative, but not as insubstantial as linking walls, fire, and destruction to the threat of non-existent Scythians.

The Greek Bosporan kingdom in the Cimmerian Bosphorus has been considered a unique manifestation in the Classical period of a type of state that mushroomed in the Hellenistic period. Its establishment arouses much debate:

“Traditionally,” it arose c. 480 BCE under the Archaeanactidae, with Panticapaeon supremacy (Tsatskhladze 2013 with bibliography). Our only ancient written source, Diodorus (12.31.1), lacks detail and is susceptible to diverse interpretations: He mixes the order, names, and dates of Bosporan kings, and in 12.31.1 is describing events of 438 BCE (Tsatskhladze 2013 with bibliography). It is now clear that the territorial state dates properly only from the last quarter of the fifth century BCE and the accession of the Spartocids; events around 480 BCE were more localized: the Archaeanactidae took power in Panticapaeum and established a tyranny.

In the Late Archaic/Early Classical period, there are traces of fire and destruction at Panticapaeum and several other settlements, the vast majority situated on the Kerch peninsula not far distant (Tsatskhladze 2013: pp. 208–211 with bibliography). Some have slated this to the “Scythian threat,” which is regularly advanced as the supposed reason for the creation of a supposed Bosporan kingdom in c. 480 BCE: Greek cities uniting under Panticapaeon leadership to resist it. Herodotus (4.28) has been mobilized in support: “when the sea and entire Cimmerian Bosphorus are frozen over, the Scythians who live this side of the trench move in campaign over the ice and drive their wagons across into the land of the Sindi.” Nothing in this passage suggests that the Scythians’ crossing the ice caused friction with the Greeks, and Herodotus was writing about his own times, nearly 50 years after the supposed creation of the kingdom. An alternative interpretation must be sought, possibly one with an Achaemenid connexion. Examining the broader aspects and context of the Graeco-Persian wars, we might suggest that Persia wished to destroy the Milesian thalassocracy (cf. Hdt. 6.7). Earlier, with the Ionian Revolt, Persian support for the Ionian cities of the Black Sea ceased. Indeed, a fleet operating from Sinope or Heraclia Pontica may have destroyed the Ionian “network,” including in the northern Black Sea (Nielsing 2010: p. 127). Alternatively, during the Graeco-Persian wars, the Achaemenids may have temporarily withdrawn from this territory, acquired through Ariaramnes’ expedition and the Scythian campaign of Darius. The ensuing power vacuum provided the circumstances for the coup in Panticapaeum that established the Archaeanactidae (cf. Hind 1994: p. 488; Burstein 2006: p. 139). Any or all of these events might have contributed to destruction of various cities in the Cimmerian Bosphorus. A unique fragmentary cuneiform inscription dating to the time of Darius I was found in Phanagoria (Tsatskhladze 2019).

Diodorus (12.31.1) places the Cimmerian Bosphorus in Asia. Detailed study of his use of the word Asia has determined that he always means Persia (Koshelenko 1999), good reason for concluding that the Cimmerian Bosphorus had indeed been part of the Achaemenid Empire. Koshelenko also sought to identify when Persian control of the region commenced. Having analyzed the passage of Ctesias (F13.20), he believed, as separately did Nielsing (2010: pp. 127–128), that it was as a result of Ariaramnes’ campaign.

What of other evidence that the Cimmerian Bosphorus came under Persian control? After the Early Classical period, Panticapaeum changed its coin standard from the Aeginetan to the Persian (Fedoseev 1997: pp. 311–312; Nieling 2010: p. 131). Some coin types also carried the impression of an eight-pointed star, interpreted as a reflexion of an Achaemenid political orientation (Fedoseev 1997: pp. 311–312). Achaemenid influence is found in the titulature of the Spartocids in the Bosporean kingdom, as testified by official inscriptions (Tokhtasev 2001). Notably, symbols found in the grave of the Bosporean king Satyrus I (d. 389/8 BCE) in the Baksinsk tomb are Achaemenid.⁷ Some find in “Gylon’s treachery” (Aeschines 3.171–172) – where the Bosporean king gave Kepoi to Gylon as a reward for his having betrayed Nymphaeum – parallels with the reward to Themistocles when he entered Persian service, leading them to conclude that this practice was a sign that the Cimmerian Bosphorus was under Achaemenid rule (Koshelenko 1999: p. 139). Furthermore, personal names yield interesting data: In the northern Black Sea quite a number occur of Persian origin (Zgusta 1955: pp. 59–72, 273–278; Fedoseev 1997: pp. 312–313). We even have “Darius” in Panticapaeum (Fraser and Matthews 2005: p. 87).

The Achaemenid presence is largely invisible, at least difficult to trace, archaeologically (Miller 2010, 2011: p. 337; Boardman 2011: p. 199). This is a paradoxical consequence of the creation of Achaemenid court art and culture, which drew on those of all the subject regions and peoples, and adopted and adapted to create something distinctive that was superimposed on the original culture of the Persians themselves (“Persianizing” them?). Persianization, whatever it might be, is hard to identify, not least because of the deliberate practice and ideology of leaving the cultural identity of subject peoples intact and maintaining their ethnic identity (*pax Persica*) (Brosius 2011: pp. 136–138; see also Tuplin 2011). Objects from the far reaches of the Achaemenid Empire are mainly goldware, silverware, jewelry, and arms, often hard to date or to identify where produced. All can be labeled “Achaemenid international style,” but apportioning such more precise identifications as “Achaemenid court style,” “Achaemenidizing satrapal art,” or “Perso-barbarian” is problematic (Miller 2010; Rehm 2010).

The northern Pontus yielded six finds of metal objects of the fifth to fourth centuries BCE that can be described as Achaemenid or Achaemenid-inspired: the handle of the Chertomlyk sword; a rhyton from the Seven Brothers tomb 4, and bowls from the Solokha, Zhirni, and Zelenskoi tombs; and a rhyton from Kul-Oba (imitation Achaemenid) (Treister 2010: pp. 223–233).⁸ The outstanding Seven Brothers rhyton was produced in an Asia Minor workshop in c. 450–425 BCE (Treister 2010: p. 227). The Seven Brothers was the burial place of the Sindian kings (Goroncharovskij 2010), whose territory had been incorporated in the Bosporean kingdom; this rhyton is most probably a

diplomatic gift, attesting to direct links with the Achaemenid Empire (Goroncharovskij 2010: pp. 88–89; Treister 2010: pp. 248–250). Another people included in the kingdom were the Maeotians. Additional Achaemenid and Achaemenid-inspired items of the first half of the fourth century BCE were discovered in the Ulyap tumuli (Erlikh 2010). The Ulski tumuli also yielded the same kinds of objects, from the second half of the sixth century BCE, prompting Erlikh (2010: p. 61) to ask whether the workshops producing items for the Maeotian elite during the period of Achaemenid expansion were Near Eastern or Transcaucasian.

A remarkable number of Achaemenid seals – 19 – were found in the northern Pontus, especially the Cimmerian Bosphorus, dating to the fifth to fourth centuries BCE: six from Panticapaeum, the Bosphoran capital, others from Bosphoran cities (Anapa, Nymphaeum, Phanagoria), elsewhere including Chersonesus, and four, unprovenanced, allegedly from Kerch (Treister 2010: pp. 252–256; see also Fedoseev 1997). Some are fine examples executed in Achaemenid court style; one carries the name of King Artaxerxes; another, a Lydian inscription. Most were cut in Anatolia, and their iconography is typically Achaemenid (Boardman 2000: pp. 163, 166, 351; Nieling 2010: pp. 131–133; Fedoseev 1997; Treister 2010: pp. 252–256). These seals are clear indication of the presence of officials and ambassadors, thus of an Achaemenid presence. Recently, an Achaemenid coin was found near another Bosphoran city: Kytæum (Fedoseev 2012: p. 319).

In the Persian Empire, royal inscriptions frequently mention Saca(e). On the Bisitun inscription (DB) (Kuhrt 2007: pp. 141–151), Saca is given in §§ 21 and 74 as a country, and as a people (“who wear pointed hats”) in §§ 74 (twice) and 75; DPh, DH mentions Saca who are beyond Sogdiana (Kuhrt 2007: p. 476); DPe, Saca as a country (Kuhrt 2007: p. 486); DSe, § 3, Saca who drink *hauma* and Saca with pointed hats, and, after Ionians of the sea, come Saca beyond the sea (Kuhrt 2007: p. 491); DNa, § 3, Saca who drink *hauma*, Saca with pointed hats, and Saca who are across the sea (Kuhrt 2007: p. 502); and A3Pb 14–15, *hauma*-drinking Saca and pointed-hat Saca (Kuhrt 2007: p. 483). Paragraph 3 of Xerxes’ inscription (XPh) also lists Saca who drink *hauma* and Saca who wear pointed hats (Kuhrt 2007: p. 305). DSaa, § 4, mentions Cimmeria, the Babylonian term for the Scythians (Kuhrt 2007: p. 497); DSab is very interesting for mentioning Saca of marsh and Saca of plain, the same groups that appear on the Tell el-Maskhouta canal stela (Kuhrt 2007: p. 479; cf. Tuplin 2010: pp. 295–296).

Much has been written about the identity and categories of Saca (Lebedynsky 2006; Kuhrt 2007: *passim*; Tuplin 2010: pp. 294–298; Potts 2012 etc.). Saca is accepted as a synonym for the Scythians because of what Herodotus (7.64) wrote about peoples participating in Xerxes’ 480 BCE expedition against Athens: Those with pointed caps and native bows, daggers, and axes were

“Amyrgian Scythians but were called Sacae, for the Persians call all Scythians Sacae...”⁹ Herodotus also noted that some believe that the Massagetae were a Scythian people living beyond the Araxes (Hdt. 1.201).

In Achaemenid royal inscriptions, Saca/Scythians is used as a generic term for the nomads living along across the northern borders of the empire. Saca who drink *hauma* and those who wear pointed hats, based on their position in the inscriptions, have been identified as Saca/Scythians dwelling in the broad geographical territory of Central Asia – also reflected in the archeological evidence (Potts 2012) – and the Saca of marsh and of plain as all Scythians of the empire’s northern periphery, not as two distinct groups (Kuhrt 2007: p. 482).

Saca living between the Caspian and Aral Seas had been incorporated into the empire by Cyrus in 550–530 BCE (Jacobs 2007; Briant 2002: pp. 127–128; Lebedynsky 2006: pp. 45–49). They are also mentioned by Herodotus (3.90–94) in his list of satrapies. Several peoples and countries he names are not listed in Achaemenid royal inscriptions, however, and vice versa.¹⁰ To the north of the aforementioned Saca, tombs of the local nomadic elite of the South Urals have yielded 80 Achaemenid(-style) objects of the end of the sixth to the third century BCE (silver, silver-gilt, and gold vessels; jewelry, arms, etc.) (Treister 2010: pp. 236–250; Treister and Yablonskii 2012). An alabastron with a quadrangular inscription contains the name of Artaxerxes I. Several are possible diplomatic gifts. A precise historical explanation for their presence is difficult; obviously, they demonstrate a long-term relationship, paramount in which might have been Achaemenid interest in this region’s gold resources (Treister and Yablonskii 2012: I, p. 288).¹¹

The suggestion that the “Saca/Scythians beyond the Sea” were probably Getae (Fol and Hammond 1988: p. 247; Kuhrt 2007: p. 491) may be doubted. We should agree with Dandamaev (1989: pp. 150–151) that although Darius’ Scythian campaign was unsuccessful, his march deep into Scythian territory in pursuit of ever retreating adversaries justified his including the North Pontic Scythians in the list of subject peoples as “Scythians across the Sea.” There were few Scythians in Dacia; the few Scythian objects found on Romanian territory are now connected to the Scytho-Persian wars of the end of the sixth century BCE (Tsatskheladze 2012: p. 343 with bibliography; Alexandrescu 2010; Vulpe 2012).

Delegations and people(s) on the Apadana relief are susceptible to various interpretations, Delegation XIX has been identified as the Scythians, and XI and XVII as Saca of other sorts (Briant 2002: p. 175; see also Potts 2012). While not all these people were under direct Achaemenid rule, surely this demonstrates that the Scythians of the northern Black Sea were under some degree of Achaemenid suzerainty? The painted battle scene on one of the beams from Tatarlı obliges us to consider the iconography of the

Saca/Scythians. Probably it depicts the enemies of the Great King, shown as undifferentiated nomads and intended to be understood as the nomads of the north (Saca/Scythians, etc.) (Summerer 2007: pp. 18–20). Of course, he must vanquish them, especially mere nomads: such is a vital part of the propaganda of the royal image.

The Persepolis tablets provide evidence of Scythians in prominent positions (Kuhrt 2007: p. 764). Elamite Treasury tablet PT1 mentions Shakka (“the Scythian”), working under Baradkama, Treasurer at Persepolis 490–480/79 BCE, perhaps as his deputy (Kuhrt 2007: pp. 787–788). PF 1790 names Shaddukka the Zappiyan, possibly “a hypocoristic of ‘the Scythian (girl)’” (Kuhrt 2007: pp. 799–800). Were these two by origin Scythians from the North Pontic steppes or just generic Saca (nomads)? In their table and appendix of ethnonyms and pseudo-ethnonyms in Persepolis, Henkelman and Stolper (2009: pp. 274–275, 300, 306) mention neither Scythians nor Saca.

The relationship between the Scythians and the Greek cities of the northern Black Sea parallels that between the Odrysian kingdom, which Thucydides (2.97) clearly states was organized along the same lines as the Achaemenid state, and nearby Greek cities. From the late fifth century BCE onward, as they turned their backs on nomadism, the Scythians demanded taxes/tribute from the Greek cities. As with the Achaemenid Empire, these were discharged not just with money or precious metal objects but with the skilled labor of Greek craftsmen, whom the Scythians used to create their local elite culture (Tsatskhladze 2010: pp. 45–50, 53–54).¹²

DPe, § 2, mentions the “Yauna/Ionians beyond the sea.” Who were they? Tuplin (2010: pp. 296–297) rejects the idea that these were Greeks living in the northern Black Sea region. But we must give serious consideration to the view that the Bosphoran kingdom and the Greeks living there were indeed within the sway of the Great King, one way or another.

My aim has been to bring to light and together the main evidence of Achaemenid involvement in the northern Pontic littoral, primarily the Cimmerian Bosphorus and deeper into the Eurasian steppes. This evidence can bear various interpretations. Matters once thought settled have recently been reawakened: the location of Skudria, the identity/identification of the Yauna (Tuplin 2010: pp. 294–298; Rollinger and Henkelman 2009; Henkelman and Stolper 2009). There is a growing acceptance that steppe Scythia and the Cimmerian Bosphorus were outliers of the Achaemenid Empire (cf. Hdt. 3.97 and comment by Nieling 2010: pp. 132–133).

When did Achaemenid control begin? Possibly c. 519 BCE, when Ariaramnes crossed the Black Sea. Although Darius’ Scythian campaign was unsuccessful, his army passed through Scythia to the Tanais and beyond, strengthening Achaemenid presence in the region. Of areas of the northern Pontus colonized by (principally Ionian) Greeks (Tsatskhladze 1994), only the Cimmerian

Bosporus, the later Bosporan kingdom, demonstrates an Achaemenid presence. Unsurprising. Dynasts ruled here – far easier for an empire to deal with than disputatious Greek *poleis*. Furthermore, the Bosporan kingdom enjoyed close links with the Scythians of the Ukrainian steppes; and both were well endowed with material and human resources, attractions for the Great King. When this involvement ceased is also unclear, despite some linking it to Pericles' Pontic expedition – which may never have happened! If it did – c. 437/6 BCE (Plut., *Per.* 20) – it had few consequences, as Achaemenid features continue in the region in the fourth century BCE.

I have presented some slight speculation, but on the balance of the evidence and of probabilities, a connectivity with the Achaemenid Empire is more likely than not. The situation is reminiscent of Colchis and Caucasian Iberia. Once, it was inconceivable that they had been under Achaemenid rule; now, ever more evidence is emerging to show that they were, forming a lesser part of the Armenian satrapy (Hdt. 3.93: Armenia and adjoining lands as far as the Black Sea) (Tsetskhladze 1994, 2003, 2006/2007: pp. 81–85; Brosius 2010: p. 34, 2011: p. 140; Tuplin 2010: p. 293).

The experience in other parts of the Black Sea was that Achaemenid rule brought little friction for locals, Greeks, or Achaemenids (in Thrace, Colchis, or the southern Black Sea). For example, the Great King allowed the Greek cities of the latter to keep their own laws and institutions until the beginning of the fourth century BCE, additionally prohibiting his officials and satraps from meddling in their internal affairs – his principal concern was that the cities and local peoples paid the taxes and tributes he demanded and furnished him with troops and provisions as and when he required them (Tsetskhladze 2008b with bibliography).

NOTES

- 1 A masterly summary can be found in Briant (2002: pp. 141–143).
- 2 Bibliography focuses on recent literature, mainly western. The extensive eastern European literature can be found by pursuing sources here cited “with bibliography.”
- 3 On the “two Scythias,” the nomadic one of the Archaic period and the (semi-)sedentary of the Classical, see Tsetskhladze (2011: pp. 120–130 with bibliography).
- 4 According to Steph. Byz., the name *Skuthai* comes from the verb *skuzesthai* (“to be angry”). Some also connect it with such Greek words as *skudmainein* or *skuthros* (“angry”) (see Tsetskhladze (2008a: p. 315) with bibliography). The personal name Skythes was widespread in the Greek world, often borne by high officials (Tsetskhladze 2008a: pp. 310–313).

- 5 Some have identified Belsk as Gelonus, the city of the Budini burned down by the Persians (Hdt. 4.108, 123). See Tuplin (2010: p. 287 with bibliography).
- 6 On Greek colonization of the Cimmerian Bosphorus, see Avram et al. (2004: pp. 941–952).
- 7 From Fedoseev (2012: p. 319). I was not able to consult the original publication.
- 8 For Near Eastern finds of the Archaic period from Kelermes and other tombs in the Kuban, see Treister (2010: pp. 232–233). Also fragments of late seventh-/early sixth-century BCE silver rhyta from Scythian tombs in the Don area and in the Ukrainian forest steppe (Treister 2010: p. 233).
- 9 Sacae are also mentioned as fighting at Marathon (Hdt. 6.113) and Plataea (Hdt. 9.31, 71), and participating in a royal pageant of Cyrus II (Xen., *Cyr.* 8.3.9–19).
- 10 For the latest combined list, see Asheri et al. (2007: pp. 540–542) (compiled: M. Brosius).
- 11 Some Achaemenid objects were found in the Pazyryk tumuli in the Altai (Treister and Yablonskii 2012: I, 48–49). A hand-knotted carpet from the fifth tumulus, most probably produced in a Bactrian-Sogdian workshop and influenced by Achaemenid artistic practice, has been interpreted as a gift from the Achaemenid king to the local chieftain (Kuhrt 2007: p. 842).
- 12 Another example: an electrum vessel from the Kul-Oba tomb, depicting a Scythian soldier binding the wounds of his companion, finds echoes in Herodotus (7.181), which talks of Persians treating binding wounds with strips of the finest linen (Kuhrt 2007: p. 587).

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CHAPTER 49

The Caucasus Region

Wolfgang Messerschmidt

The History of the Caucasus Region According to Primary and Secondary Sources

In dealing with the history of the southern Caucasian regions during the first half of the first millennium, there is an unfortunate lack of indigenous sources and not even the classical tradition can furnish us with much dependable information. As represented in the Greek sources, the kingdom of Colchis resembles a mythological construct rather than an historical entity and, in any case, there is no significant archeological or primary source tradition that we know of (Bill 2003: pp. 29, 34–35, 38). In all likelihood, Colchis and the eastern parts of modern Georgia (Kartli) were dominated by tribal structures including a clearly distinguishable elite, for which there is evidence in a number of sumptuously furnished burial sites (Lordkipanidze 2000: p. 8; Bill 2010: pp. 17–21, 24). There is less evidence for Albania (modern Azerbaijan), though, at least, Strabo (11.4.6) seems to describe a decentralized society closely adhering to tribal groupings, even if he does not clearly indicate for which period this is true. Urartu was the lone exception among the polities of this region: it could look back on political structures dating back to the early Iron Age, and there is some evidence of literacy and a literary tradition that can be used to gain further information on the history and culture of the Caucasus (Zimansky 1998: pp. 70–99, 100–167).

Based on the new and improved reading of the Nabonidus Chronicle (ii 15–16; Oelsner 1999–2000: pp. 378–380), we may with some confidence date the beginning of Achaemenid expansion into the Trans-Caucasian regions. According to the Chronicle, in the ninth year of the reign of King Nabonidus of Babylon (547 BCE), Kuraš of Parsu led his army against an enemy country, gained a significant victory, killed the enemy king and secured his new conquests with military garrisons. Unfortunately, the Chronicle is damaged in the exact spot where the enemy country is named, though new analysis seems to indicate that we may indeed read Uraštu (Rollinger 2008: pp. 5–7; for the arguments adduced by Zawadski 2010: 146–147, see now in detail Rollinger and Kellner 2019). That Urartu was part of the Persian Empire is confirmed by the Behistun Inscription from 522 BCE. In the Babylonian text, Darius I lists Urartu as being among the countries of the empire (Voigtländer 1978: p. 54), while in the Old Persian list of the *dahyāva* (= countries), we find the first attested mention of the name Armina (Schmitt 1991: p. 49), and the Elamic text mentions Ḫarminuya (Rollinger 2008: p. 61). Thus it seems fairly uncontroversial that both names may be seen as synonyms for the same region. The particular political traditions of Urartu were certainly known to the Persian rulers. It is certainly not by coincidence that Xerxes placed a trilingual inscription in the region of Van (Inscription XVa), close to the Urartian capital of Tušpa, so as to clearly emphasize Achaemenid domination (Kent 1953: pp. 113, 152–153; Schmitt 2009: pp. 180–182; cf. Briant 2002: p. 742). That the peoples of the Trans-Caucasian regions were permanently part of the Persian Empire is further attested by the available Greek sources, though the rather eclectic nature of the sources themselves prevent systematic analysis. We may glimpse some evidence for Achaemenid expansion beyond Urartu/Armenia in the account of Herodotus. If B. Jacobs (2000, 2006) is to be followed in his interpretation of Herodotus IV 98–142, the famous expedition of Darius I against the Scythians (512 BCE) was divided into two individual campaigns: while the Great King himself led his army eastwards across the Istros (= Danube), a second army advanced to the regions beyond the Caucasus. Though the original goal of the expedition, the conquest of Scythia, had to be abandoned, the conquered lands beyond the Caucasus seem to have remained under Persian overlordship. This, in turn, presupposes complete Persian control of those regions to the immediate south of the Caucasus. Thus, we may trace at least a temporary frontier of the Persian empire as running along the Oaros (= Sal), a tributary to the Don river. Here, according to Herodotus, Persian troops fortified the frontier by building a series of fortresses (Jacobs 2000: map p. 94; *here* Figure 49.1).

But Persian rule in Ciscaucasia seems not to have been lasting. Herodotus 3.97 explicitly describes the Persian empire as reaching to the Caucasus, while the peoples beyond the mountain range are said to be independent. This was probably

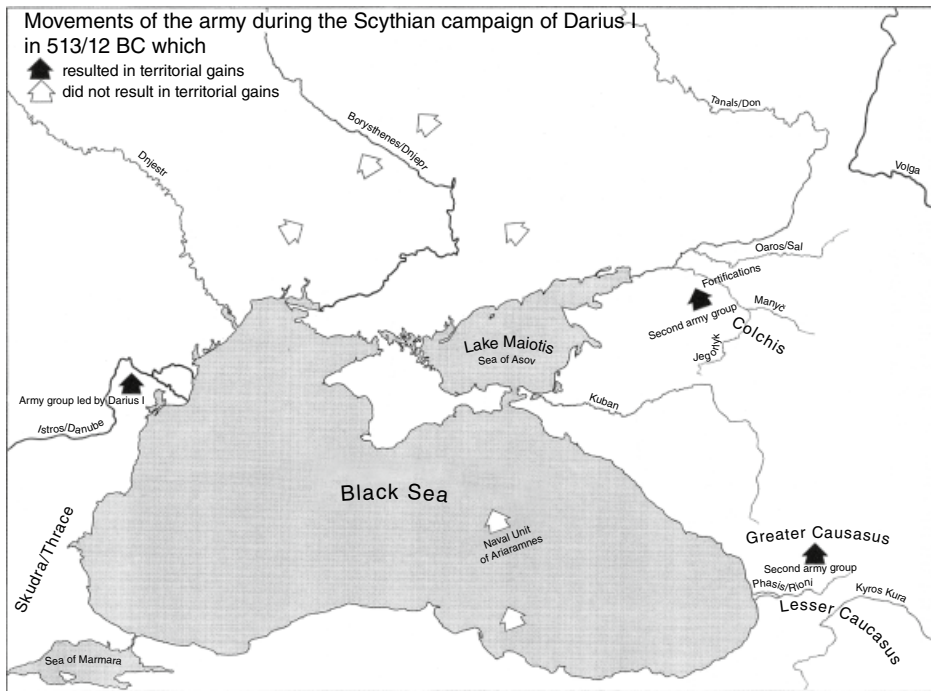


Figure 49.1 The Scythian campaign of Darius I in 512 BCE. Source: Modified by C. Marcks-Jacobs, reproduced by permission of B. Jacobs.

the political situation of c. 450 BCE. In addition, natural conditions suggest the Caucasus mountain ranges as a logical frontier (Jacobs 2000: pp. 99–100). Thus, the people of Trans-Caucasia may be assumed to have formed a permanent part of the Achaemenid empire. Indeed, the Trans-Caucasian Armenians, Colchians, and Saspeirians furnished troops for Xerxes' invasion of Greece (Herodotus 7.73; 79), as did the Alarodians, an ethnonym which may be etymologically related to the Urartians. This situation seems not to have changed until Alexander's conquest of Persia: Armenians, Cadusians, Albanians, and Sacasinians fought on the side of Darius III at the battle of Gaugamela in 331 BCE (Arrian *Anab.* 3.8.4–5; Curt. Ruf. 4.12.10–12). What is remarkable, however, is that the Armenian contingent fought under their own satraps, Orontes and Mithraustes, while the other peoples were led by the satrap of Media, Atropates. This would seem to indicate that, at least on an administrative level, the eastern Trans-Caucasian regions formed part of the satrapy of Media (Jacobs 1994: pp. 179–182).

There is more detailed evidence of this in Xenophon's account of the anabasis of the Ten Thousand in 400/399 BCE (cf. Jacobs 1994: pp. 183–186). According to this information, Armenia was divided into two individual satrapies (see also Briant 2002: p. 741). The governor of the smallish administrative region of western Armenia was subordinated to the satrap of the

region described as Armina in the Behistun Inscription. The latter position had been hereditary at least since the end of the fifth century BCE and was occupied by the descendants of one Orontes, a son-in-law of Artaxerxes II. The Orontes who led the Armenian contingent at Gaugamela was in all likelihood a grandson of the original Orontes (Messerschmidt 2000: p. 38f.). That Armenia was divided into two administrative units is further confirmed by the mention of two separate armies being sent to suppress a revolt in Armenia, as described by the Behistun Inscription (Jacobs 1994: p. 183).

A later addition to Xenophon's account of the Ten Thousand lists all those peoples that the Greek mercenaries came into contact with on their way through Armenia to the Black Sea (Xenophon *Anab.* 7.8.25). According to this list, a number of peoples had settled the easternmost Pontic and western Trans-Caucasian regions, namely Carduchians, Chalybians, Chaldaeans (= worshippers of Haldi reminiscent of Urartu), Macronians, Colchians, Mossynoecians, Coetians, and Tibarenians. According to the anonymous author, these peoples were "autonomous," and indeed they are listed after the satraps and the regions they controlled. But though we could understand this to mean that these peoples were not subject to satrapal rule, we should not assume that they were independent. Rather, we should assume that they were part of the Persian empire around 400 BCE, even if the campaign of Artaxerxes III against the Cadusians, as attested by Justin 10.3, seems to indicate a degree of disturbances in this region. Furthermore, the fact that, according to Strabo 11.14.9, Armenian ore mines aroused the interest of Alexander, presupposes the existence of such mines in Achaemenid times and their economic importance for the Persian empire.

Local source traditions of later periods provide us with further clues for Achaemenid rule in Armenia, though this evidence should by no means be taken at face value. The picture of Persian governance given by these sources is remarkably positive, which may be a reflection of the relatively stable and secure conditions under Persian rule. But we should not exaggerate the historical importance of this material, particularly in its references to religious conditions and the strong Iranian influence in this sphere, which may be due to later inferences (Meissner 2000: pp. 193–203).

Archeological Evidence for Persian Rule

If the literary sources only offer us a glimpse into the forms of Persian rule, archeological evidence, too, for a long time could not measurably further our knowledge. This has started to change with recent excavations. Indeed, archeological finds in central and eastern Georgia, in western Azerbaijan, and in Armenia itself, seem to indicate a form of Achaemenid direct rule over these regions (Knauss 2009: pp. 299–300; *here* Figure 49.2).

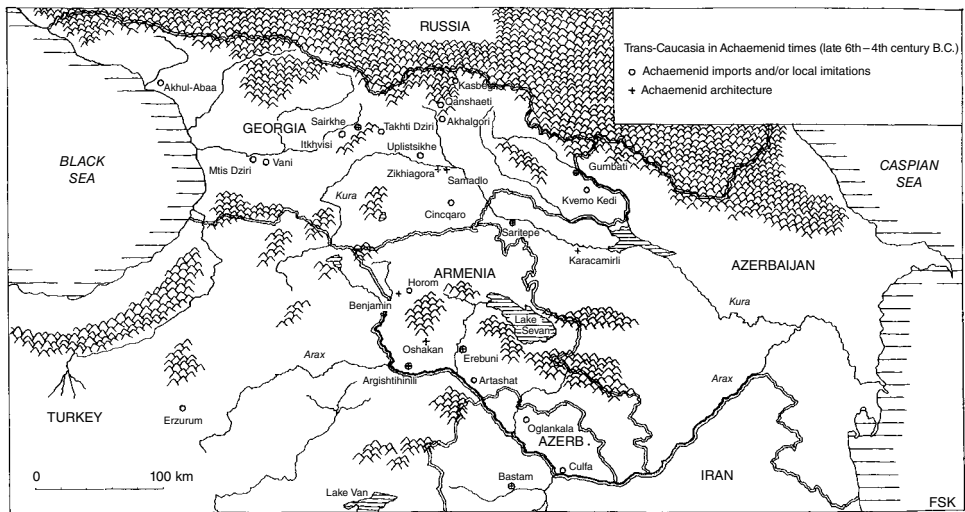


Figure 49.2 Map of Achaemenid Transcaucasia. Source: Modified by C. Marcks-Jacobs, reproduced by permission of F.S. Knauf.

In central and eastern Georgia – Iberia in the ancient sources – excavations have uncovered buildings in Sairkhe, Samadlo, Zikhiagora, Uplistsikhe, and Gumbati heavily influenced by Achaemenid models. Striking examples of this include bell-shaped bases of wooden columns and protomes of bulls that recall Persian royal buildings in Persepolis, Pasargadae, Susa, and Babylon (Knauss 2005: pp. 202–205; for Gumbati esp. Knauss 2000, 2005: p. 204, 2006: pp. 89–91). Such influences are also present in building in Sari Tepe and Qarajamirli in western Azerbaijan. Recently, a large estate was excavated in Qarajamirli, which comprised a central monumental complex, parks, and a representative entrance building (Babaev et al. 2007, 2009; Babaev and Knauss 2010; Knauß et al. 2013), and which may have been utilized as a royal residence. There are no earlier examples in Georgia or Azerbaijan as far as dimensions, quality of building materials, and execution are concerned. This dramatic shift away from pre-Achaemenid architectural forms in the Trans-Caucasian region can only be explained with a considerable influx of foreign craftsmen and specialists from the cultural centers of the Persian Empire (Knauss 2000: pp. 121–125, 2006: pp. 95–96, 105). It may be said with all due caution that the representative complexes of eastern Georgia and western Azerbaijan may be understood as architectural manifestations of the Persian administrative system, and that the architectural components had a programmatic character (Knauss 2000: pp. 121, 126, 2005: p. 204). There is much less evidence for Colchis, though here, too, protomes in the shape of a bull's head found at Vani recall Achaemenid architectural models (Knauss 2009: p. 299).

According to recent examinations, in Nachitshevan (southwestern Azerbaijan), too, Achaemenid influence is present. The simple constructed refuges of Çalxanqala and Vayxir Qala demonstrably resemble northwestern Iranian architecture of the sixth century BCE, while the monumental fortress of Oğlankale shows evidence at least of an Achaemenid-influenced construction phase with corresponding column bases (Schachner 2001: pp. 310–318). From this we may infer similar political conditions in modern south-western Azerbaijan as those prevalent during the Achaemenid period in eastern Georgia, Colchis, and Armenia. In the latter region, in contrast to Georgia and Azerbaijan, Achaemenid rule could rely on already developed administrative structures dating back to Uartian traditions. This continuity is also evident in architecture: Uartian fortresses in Erebuni (Erevan) and Argištihinili (Armavir) continued to be in use, ancient buildings within the fortresses were reconstructed, and new buildings of a more monumental nature were erected. In Benjamin/Draskhanakert, a new building in the style of a high-ranking residence was erected (Kanecjan 2000: pp. 103–110; Knauss 2005:

pp. 209–210, 2006: pp. 100–102), and the bell-shaped bases belonging to it again recall the representative architecture of the Persian capitals (Zardarian and Akopian 1994: p. 185; Knauss 2005: p. 209). The rather surprising discovery in Armavir of cuneiform tablets dating to the late sixth or early fifth century and written in Elamite is further evidence for the incorporation of Armenia into the empire-wide satrapal administration (Zardarian and Akopian 1994: p. 173; Knauss 2005: p. 210).

Further Achaemenid influences for the period from the middle of the sixth century onward are present in the ceramic finds of Iberia and the extant examples of golden jewelry from Colchis (Gagoshidze 1996: pp. 126–127; Knauss 2005: pp. 197–199, 2009: pp. 291–299), though there is no consensus among scholars as to what conclusions may be derived from this. O. Lordkipanidze and A. Bill claim that these influences are the result of cultural interactions across political borders and should not be seen as evidence of direct Persian rule (Lordkipanidze 2000: pp. 11–12, 2001: pp. 143–190; Bill 2010; but see Knauss 2005: p. 200, 2009: p. 291).

Still, some examples of Achaemenid-influenced artistic metalworking (toreutics) found in Georgian burial sites from the middle of the sixth century onward, seem to indicate a mounting intensity of contacts between Georgia and Persia proper. Taken on their own, they are certainly not reliable evidence for Achaemenid direct rule. But considered in conjunction with the numerous examples of Achaemenid architecture, we may interpret their appearance as burial gifts as being representative of a slow integration of Georgian elites into the Achaemenid system of redistribution (Briant 2002: p. 742).

The Achaemenid-influenced residences in eastern Georgia and western Azerbaijan were abandoned sometime around the middle of the fourth century BCE; traces of violent destruction are present in the ceramic evidence (for Gumbati: Knauss 2000: p. 127; for the apparently non-violent abandonment of Qarajamirli see Babaev and Knauss 2010: p. 248). Scattered evidence for later resettlement is probably indicative of an end of the political structures associated with these administrative buildings, though, in light of the paucity of our sources, we cannot be certain of this.

Remarkably, fourth-century Armenia seems to have witnessed a markedly different development: recent analyses show traces of a continuity of settlement from Urartian to Hellenistic times. This continuity may very well be indicative of enduring and stable political structures, particularly as Armenia continued to be ruled by the same dynasty after the watershed of 331 BCE, though now its representatives were no longer mere satraps of the Persian Great King but rather kings of Armenia in their own right (Zardarian and Akopian 1994: pp. 194–195; Messerschmidt 2000: pp. 39–41).

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- Braund, D. (1994). *Georgia in Antiquity: A History of Colchis and Transcaucasian Iberia 550 BC–AD 562*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. Offers a useful approach to Trans-Caucasian history in ancient times, esp. pp. 122–151 for Georgia in the Achaemenid period.

CHAPTER 50

The Nomads of the Steppes

Bruno Jacobs and Birgit Gufler

Nomads and Nomadism: Ancient Sources vs. Modern Definitions

Embracing the whole Ancient Near East, the Achaemenid Empire was bordered by sea and deserts on its western, southern, and eastern sides: the Thar desert east of the easternmost provinces *Ḫataguš*/*Sattagydia* and *Hinduš*/India; the Arabian Sea, Persian Gulf, and Red Sea in the south; and the Mediterranean Sea in the west. In the south and southwest the sea borders were partly interrupted by deserts in the Arabian peninsula and in Northeast Africa. Whereas borders marked by the sea are clearly determined, boundaries in deserts are less well defined. The same must have been true in the north of the empire where the greatest part of its frontiers ran through the Eurasian steppes. According to classical, i.e. Greek and Latin, sources, these deserts and steppes were to a considerable extent inhabited by nomads.

With a focus on the Ancient Near East and Central Asia, Scharrer has on several occasions dealt with the key aspects of nomadism, providing a comprehensive overview of the research literature (Scharrer 2002a; 2002b: pp. 287–301; 2004). In this context he has also given a very succinct definition of nomadism in its various manifestations (Scharrer 2002b: pp. 288–291; cf. Potts 2014: pp. 1–3). In his view, nomadism is characterized, first, by pastoral farming as subsistence strategy (i.e. it represents a kind of pastoralism) and second, by a mobile lifestyle. So nomads are to be distinguished from all groups of

people who adhere to a mobile lifestyle but do not primarily practice pastoral farming, e.g. hunters, gatherers, etc. Again, since they change their whereabouts cyclically or periodically, the way of life of nomads must also be differentiated from any form of mobility whose purpose is simply to find a new place of settlement at the end of a period of migration. A third feature of nomadism stressed by Scharrer is that the term can be applied only to a collective. So transhumance, a form of pastoralism involving seasonal migration mostly from the summer pasture to the winter pasture and *vice versa*, is to be regarded as nomadism only if practiced by a whole ethnic group. Groups in which the majority is sedentary and only shepherds accompany the animals to their summer and winter pastures do not qualify for the label nomad (cf. Potts 2014: pp. 3–5).

That people whom ancient sources term nomads (Greek νομάδες, Latin *nomades*) do not necessarily satisfy these criteria is obvious. The term is applied to groups that practice pastoral farming as well as to ones that move around (Scharrer 2002a: pp. 182–186). So, ancient sources often do not allow us to decide whether a set of people are migrants, sedentary cattle-breeders, or genuine nomads (Scharrer 2002b: p. 291).

True nomadism can be sub-divided into various categories depending on the species of animals bred by the nomads in question or the sorts of mount that they use (cf. Lebedynsky 2006: pp. 163–166), but these distinctions cannot be addressed here. It may suffice to say that when dealing with the Achaemenid Empire's northern frontier, most classical authors concentrate their ethnographic attention on the Black Sea area (cf. Skinner 2012: pp. 68–78). Moreover, when they do turn their attention to Trans-Caspian nomads, they all seem to share the impression that the cultural behavior of the groups east and west of the Caspian Sea was essentially the same (cf. Briant 1982: pp. 181–183). The fact that the Babylonian versions of Achaemenid inscriptions call the Sakā *Gimirrāja*, i.e. Cimmerians, a word with consistently western associations, suggests that the same was true of Persians.

The Steppe Region: Nomads and Sedentaries in Contact

A major problem in the study of ancient nomadism is the relationship between nomads and sedentary populations and the possibility of symbiosis and mutual penetration between the two ways of life. (For the following see the – differently contextualized – discussion in Scharrer 2002b: pp. 292–296.) On a theoretical level one might wonder whether it is possible for nomads to pursue an autarkic subsistence strategy. In practice, the answer seems to be that it is not, and that interaction between nomads and sedentary people is therefore

inescapable. Such interaction was, in fact, already a topic in ancient ethnography, and Greco-Roman sources describe the resulting contacts in a variety of ways, frequently laying stress on the potential for conflict. Their view was that the two categories, nomad and settled, were quite distinct one from another, but in reality a strict dichotomy of this sort cannot be assumed to apply in all circumstances (cf. Briant 1982: pp. 9–56; Shaw 1982/1983; Scharrer 2004). This already makes it clear that to draw a contrast between “nomad” provinces (i.e. the various *Sakā* territories and *Uvārazmī* named in the Achaemenid inscriptions) and “sedentary” ones to their south is probably to be guilty of oversimplification (cf. Briant 1982: pp. 218–226, 2002: pp. 39, 747; Khozhaniyazov 2006: pp. 105–126, esp. 123).

Two possible models for describing the encounters (economic and territorial) and interdependencies between the nomadic and the sedentary ways of life may be noted. The first goes back to M.B. Rowton, who took a pre-existing idea of “dimorphisme” and developed the concept of a *dimorphic society*, with a focus on the relationship between *tribe* and *state*, the latter being manifested in a settlement (*town*) (Rowton 1967: esp. pp. 114–116; Rowton 1976: see esp. n. 4 with reference to further articles by the same author). This approach was criticized by N.P. Lemche on the grounds that it could not encompass the sheer diversity of the ways in which the two modes of life might intermingle. As a way of capturing this variety, Lemche suggested discarding the term *dimorphic* and speaking instead of a *polymorphic society* (Lemche 1996: pp. 39–41). A second model for describing the topographic and cultural permeability of areas of contact between sedentary and nomad populations is that of the frontier, as developed by S.B. Murphy. The underlying perspective here is that states are not homogeneous systems (because center and periphery are necessarily too dissimilar for this to be the case) and that their frontier zones, as areas of territory of simultaneous interpenetration and separation, have a distinctive dynamic caused by the ongoing struggle between elements in fusion and disunion (Murphy 2004: p. 77).

Both models may be useful when we try to understand the geopolitical and ethnographic situation in the vast territories east of the Caspian Sea whose nomadic tribes formed an integral part of the empire. When dealing with these areas we must not only consider the initiatives and methods used by the Achaemenids in their attempt to control them – something made difficult by the fact that at the moment we can neither say how far the various Saka provinces extended to the north (cf. the discussion in Potts 2012: esp. pp. 466–467) nor describe the divergent strategies of local control within their territories (cf. generally Rogers 2012) – but also be aware of the numerous possible forms of encounter between nomads and sedentaries within the state’s territory. Examples of the way in which different groups interlock and merge within a frontier zone are provided by the array of settlements and

strongholds in Chorasmia in Achaemenid times (Khozhaniyazov 2006: p. 123), or by the fact that seasonal campsites established by mobile pastoralists and permanent settlements built by agriculturalists are found next door to one another in ancient southeastern Uzbekistan (Frachetti and Maksudov 2014).

The primary sources, especially Achaemenid inscriptions, are silent about such matters, however; and classical sources are apt to conceal the realities either by treating nomadic groups as the opponents of Achaemenid armies or by introducing them into such armies in a stereotypical fashion, generally as a cavalry component under a native leader (Hdt. 7.64; Arr. Anab. 3.8.3, etc.). But representations of this sort may reflect an administrative perspective rather than the existence of a consistent mode of life within the whole territory; and in other instances such sources are well aware of the fact that the northern parts of the Achaemenid Empire and the areas beyond contained many different peoples with very divergent subsistence strategies. Herodotus (4.17–27) already provides the names of a significant number of population groups in the Black Sea region and further east, including hunters and gatherers, herds-men, and agriculturalists. Writing about the Parthian era, Strabo (11.8.2) informs us that *Dahae* is not the name of a single great tribe but a generic term for several entities, among them the Xanthioi (Exarthrioi), the Pissouroi, and the Parnoi, and a little later (11.8.6–7) he takes *Massagetae* as an umbrella term for a number of groups living in markedly diverging eco-systems and practicing very different ways of life. A similar view may be implicit in Pliny's lengthy list of Sacae peoples (NH 6.50).

Birgit Gufler and Bruno Jacobs

Campaigns of Achaemenid Kings in the Steppe Region and the Localization of the Saka Provinces

Achaemenid inscriptions list various provinces (*dahyāva*) which are to be located in the steppe region east of the Caspian Sea: *Uvārazmī/Chorasmia*, (country of the) *Dahā*/the *Dahae*, (country of the) *Sakā tigraxaudā*/the *Sacae with pointed caps*, and (country of the) *Sakā haumavargā*/the *Hauma laying Sacae*. In some of the Achaemenid lists of *dahyāva* we find a fifth name, that of the (country of the) *Sakā tayai paradraya*/the *Sacae who are beyond the sea*; this will be addressed below.

Reconstruction of the campaigns of Achaemenid kings in the steppe regions largely depends on the localization of the above-named countries and *vice versa* (cf. Jacobs 1994: pp. 257–260; 2010). Given the patchy quality of the sources, any reconstruction will necessarily be tentative. In the text of Bisotun, the oldest Achaemenid royal inscription, Darius specifies *Uvārazmī/Chorasmia* and *Saka/Saka country*. He reports that they *fell to his lot*, i.e. were inherited

from his predecessors (DB § 6). It is consistent with this that Babylonian administrative texts indicate that Chorasmiens (Zadok 1981: pp. 658–659 [UCP 9/2, 38 and 39, dated 534 BCE]; cf. Zadok 1976: p. 214) and Sacae/Gimirrāja (Dandamayev 1979: pp. 101–102 [BE VIII, 80]; cf. Dandamayev 2012) were present in Babylonia during the reign of Cyrus the Great and Cambyses II: so it is almost certain that the regions they came from had become part of the Achaemenid Empire before these texts were written.

In the main text of the Bisotun inscription (§§ 1–70), *Saka* (= “Saka territory”) is still not differentiated and the term acts as a general designation for the region of the Sacae. The same is true of the list in the inscription DPe (§ 6), probably written between 515 and 512 BCE. Here again *Uvārazmī/Chorasmia* and – sweepingly – *Sakā/(country of the) Sacae* are mentioned. This fits with the reliefs of the reception hall at Persepolis showing two delegations, nos. 11 and 17 (Figures 50.1 and 50.2), which probably represented those lands. The planning of those reliefs also goes back to the middle of the penultimate decade of the sixth century BCE (Jacobs 1997).

That the areas where the various Saka peoples lived in these cases are lumped together simply as *Saka/Saka country* (DB § 6) and as *Sakā/(country of the) Sacae* (DPe § 6) disguises the fact that – at least in the beginning of Persian rule – the peoples in question showed quite different attitudes and behavior toward the central authority. An example of this can be deduced from the Bisotun inscription. In § 21 the list of countries of whose revolt Darius learned during a stay in Babylon in late December 522 BCE includes just *Saka*, the *Saka country*. But when the king reports how he suppressed that uprising in his third regnal year, he calls the enemy *Sakā tayai xaūdām tigrām baranti/* the *Sacae who wear the pointed cap* (§ 74), thus distinguishing them from other groups.



Figure 50.1 Persepolis, Apadana, eastern stairway, delegation 11. Source: D-DAI-EUR-TEH1964-0264, reproduced by permission of the German Archaeological Institute.



Figure 50.2 Persepolis, Apadana, eastern stairway, delegation 17. Source: D-DAI-EUR-TEH1964-0262, reproduced by permission of the German Archaeological Institute.

We have no reason to doubt that these pointed-cap-wearing nomads were inhabitants of the *Saka country* and were among those whose insurgency had been mentioned earlier. And it seems equally clear that the *Sacae who wear the pointed cap* are identical with the *Sakā tigraxaydā*, the *Sacae with pointed caps*, who figure in lists of countries written after 512 BCE, where they always turn up alongside the *Sakā haumavargā*/the *Haoma-laying Sacae*, who are called *Amyrgians* in classical sources.

Now, it is wholly improbable that the territory of these last-named Sacae was conquered by Darius. Around 515 BCE he undertook a campaign beyond the (south)eastern borders of the empire to win the lower Indus valley (Sindh). Given the vast distances he had to cover for this undertaking it is very unlikely that during the same campaign he also proceeded to the northeast to subjugate the Amyrgians. Their territory must have been conquered already by Cyrus the Great.

In contrast to the campaigns of Cyrus against the Medes and the Babylonians, and of Cambyses against Egypt, we know nothing about the chronology of Cyrus' expeditions to the east or of the course of events there. Once again, the vastness of the territories involved forces us to postulate at least two campaigns, one to the later empire's southeast, i.e. to *Haraupatiš/Arachosia* and the lands thereabout, and one to the northeast, i.e. to *Bāxtriš/Bactria* and the surrounding territories. It may be the latter campaign (or a third one) that is in the background of the stories in Herodotus (1.201–214), Ctesias (FGrHist F 9 §§7–8. [Lenfant]) and Berossus (F 11 [Verbrugghe/Wickersham]) about the circumstances of Cyrus' death.

Cyrus' death is reported in many different versions. In Xenophon, he dies in Persia in bed, probably because a perfect life must not end with death on the battlefield. In Herodotus, Ctesias, and Berossus, he dies during an expedition into the Trans-Caspian region, in Herodotus still on the battlefield, in

Ctesias later due to a wound that he received fighting. In Herodotus, the battle was lost, as well as the corpse of the king (1.214). In Ctesias, the battle was won and Cyrus died only after having settled his succession (F 9[8]). According to Herodotus, the king's last struggle took place north of a river called Araxes; according to Berossus in a region named Daas. In Herodotus, the enemies are called Scythians; in Ctesias, the Persians are allied with the Sacae and fight against the Derbikes, who are for their part allied with Indians; in Berossus, the enemies are not named at all.

So it is extremely difficult – if at all possible – to reconstruct what happened and how the campaign went off. If we start with Herodotus, who gives the most detailed report, we are confronted with the proposition that at nearly 70 years of age, Cyrus proposed marriage to the queen of the Massagetae, Tomyris, with the aim of getting her kingdom as a dowry. When she refused, he decided to acquire her territory by war (Hdt. 1.205).

A fierce fight took place between Persians and Massagetae on the far side of the Araxes, here clearly to be identified as the Āmū Darjā. Herodotus describes the Araxes as having 40 branches, almost all of which end up in marshes and swamps (Hdt. 1.202) in a region whose inhabitants eat raw fish and wear seal skins, and the Āmū Darjā duly flows into Lake Aral, where seals are still to be found today (albeit threatened by ecological degradation). Moreover, one branch of the river, Herodotus tells us, ran west and emptied into the Caspian Sea, and this must be the Uzboj, today waterless and surely already in ancient times not a broad waterway (cf. Létolle 2000; Yagodin 2010: pp. 53–54).

If we venture to combine the divergent information in Herodotus, Ctesias, and Berossus about the successes and misfortunes of the campaign, the region where Cyrus lost his life, and the fate of the king's body, we may, with all due caution, suggest that an initial success was gained in the region between the Āmū Darjā and the Syr Darjā, but that the Massagetae retreated around Lake Aral and that Cyrus met his death in a battle on the other side – as Berossus says, in Daas.¹ The country of the Dahae is admittedly only localized between the Caspian Sea and Lake Aral by a much later source (Strab. 11.8.2), but there seems to be no reason to suppose a mass immigration into that area in Achaemenid or early Hellenistic times which was overlooked by the sources (Jacobs 2010).

If the events are reconstructed this way, they were seemingly similar to what happened about a decade later, when Darius campaigned in the same region to suppress the revolt of the *Sacae who wear the pointed cap*. He defeated the rebels, but apparently did not succeed in getting hold of their chief because there is no report about his punishment and execution, and, what is more, he is not even mentioned. That the man who is named in the text and depicted in the relief, the Saka Skunkha (here Figure 74.2), was not the head of the insurgency has long been understood (Nagel 1983: p. 172). Darius in his

inscription explicitly says that this Skunkha was head of another Saka group (DB § 74), and that he was deposed and replaced by someone else. As this group of nomads is never accused of rebellion it must have been hitherto independent. Not being an insurgent, Skunkha was neither humiliated nor executed. Visible expression of his different treatment is the fact that in the representation at Bisotun Skunkha is not deprived of his hat.

Apparently the Persian army was active in two neighboring regions, which were separated by a stretch of water. The army crossed it on tree trunks. Given the obvious tactical complexity of the campaign and the fact that the enemy was taken by surprise, this stretch of water must be the Syr-Darjā or a bay on the northern shore of Lake Aral.² Consequently, after having crossed it, Darius must have found himself in the territory of the Dahae. Apparently the nomads had again retreated around Lake Aral, but were checkmated and defeated by Darius' strategy (cf. Briant 1982: p. 188, with references to older literature). In this way the rebellion was put down and the territory of the Dahae, who had hitherto been independent, was annexed.

According to these reconstructions, the campaigns of Cyrus and Darius seem to have been largely parallel in character – apart from the outcome of the battle fought west of Lake Aral. If this is true, Herodotus' Massagetae and Darius' *Sacae who wear the pointed cap* should be identified (pace Briant 1982: p. 189), while Skunkha must be a leading figure among the *Dahā*.³

The *Dahā* are only actually named in a list of the empire's *dahyāva* from the time of Xerxes (XPh § 3). Because no further campaign to the empire's northeast is recorded in the sources, and because the two designations never figure side by side, it has been argued that the term *Dahā* replaced the phrase *Sakā tayai paradraya*, with both terms actually applying to the same region and inhabitants (Nagel 1982: p. 63) and *-draya* therefore designating the Caspian Sea. The common identification of the *Sakā tayai paradraya* with the Scythians of the northern Black Sea region (so that *-draya* referred to the Black Sea) has been criticized on the ground that Darius' campaign against this people was unsuccessful. It is true that in an article addressing all the problems connected with Darius' Scythian expedition, Tuplin raises the possibility that Herodotus' narrative, in which an alleged disaster beyond the Danube distracts attention from what was a successful Persian campaign in southeastern Europe, is the product of Greek misrepresentation and that the alleged disaster may not be historical (Tuplin 2010). But even if we accept for a moment the possibility that the Scythian expedition caused a temporary, if geographically limited, success, one may nonetheless wonder whether it is plausible that the territory of the *Dahā*, already conquered in the third year of Darius' reign, does not figure in a list of *dahyāva* until more than 30 years later. In light of these considerations it may still be preferable to identify the *Sakā paradraya* with the *Dahā*.

If we accept that two of the three Saka groups named in the latest Achaemenid list of countries are to be located east of the Caspian Sea (the *Dahā*) and between the Āmū Darjā and the Syr Darjā (the *Sakā tigraxaudā*), there remains only one group to be localized, the *Sakā haumavargā*, the Amyrgians of the classical sources. The solution can be found in the inscriptions DH and DPh, where Darius describes the extension of his empire not by enumerating the provinces but by naming its outermost points. The southwestern, southeastern, and northwestern corners are identified by the names of provinces, i.e. Nubia, Lydia, and India, while the northeasternmost region is said to be that of the *Sacae who are beyond Sogdiana*. This leads us to the far side of the Syr Darjā, to western Kirgistan and the adjacent regions of Kazakhstan to the north.

Fragments of Information on the History and Administration of the Steppe Area During Achaemenid Times

During Achaemenid times the countries of the Sacae as well as Chorasmia seem to have been governed by local rulers: at any rate, on the few occasions on which secondary sources say anything pertinent, the people in charge are always natives of the country. A certain Pharasmanes, who sought to come to an agreement with Alexander the Great, is introduced as king of the Chorasmians (Arr. Anab. 4.15.4: Χορασμίων βασιλεύς), although there can be no doubt that Chorasmia had been part of the Achaemenid Empire until Alexander's arrival. From that one can deduce that Chorasmia enjoyed a kind of autonomy. The same should be true for the Sacae, who took part in the battle of Gaugamela under their leader Mauaces, and followed the Bactrian satrap Bessus, as Arrian tells us, not as his subjects but on the basis of an alliance with Darius (Arr. Anab. 3.8.3). No foreign governor is ever mentioned in relation with these nomads, although they were without doubt subjects of the Persian king and bound to fulfill certain obligations, especially military service – for example, they took part in the battle at Marathon, forming the center of the front together with the Persians (Hdt. 6.113), and Amyrgians are said to have been involved in the campaign of Xerxes against Greece, again, as in the case of Gaugamela, under the satrap of the Bactrians (Hdt. 7.64).

One may therefore suppose that the man appointed by Darius to replace Skunkha after the defeat of the latter also belonged to the local elite and may have been a relative of the dethroned ruler.

It has long been recognized that the special status of the northern nomads was also indicated iconographically: the abovementioned delegations

no. 11 and 17 on the stairways of the great reception hall at Persepolis are the only ones that wear weapons. All six members of delegation 11 are depicted with an *akinakes* hanging down openly from the girdle and fastened by a strip around the right leg; the leader is additionally equipped with a bow case, a so-called *gorytos* (Walser 1966: pp. 85, Pl. 18, 56–57; here Figure 50.1). In a similar fashion, each of the five members of delegation 17 is equipped with an *akinakes* and at least the first four members of this deputation carry a *gorytos* in addition (Walser 1966: p. 93 Pl. 24, 69; here Figure 50.2).

The fact that the Sacae not only regularly followed the satrap of Bactria into battle⁴ but were among the final defenders of Achaemenid suzerainty against Alexander (Arr. Anab. 3.28.10; 4.5.4; 16.4; Curt. 7.7.32; 8.3.1) demonstrates that this political connection was especially attractive for the Sacae. Briant suggested that this solidarity was based on an historical tradition and nurtured by personal relations with particular satraps of Bactria (Briant 1982: pp. 213–226). But it can be better understood as the result of the administrative incorporation of the relevant regions into the empire, and one may also wonder whether the “frontier” model mentioned above helps to explain the attractiveness of the relationship in commercial and economic terms (cf. Yagodin 2010: pp. 53–54).

The administrative system that associated the Saka territories with the Bactrian satrapy, and may have included Chorasmia in a similar way (Jacobs 1994: pp. 177–178, 191), turned out to be a geopolitically stabilizing factor. It was only when the Seleucid Empire became weak in the third and second centuries BCE that nomadic tribes from across the northeastern frontier invaded the territory of the former Achaemenid Empire.

Already in Achaemenid times, however, one can observe a certain north–south movement. It has been suggested that names like Massaga or (M)Assakenoi betray an intrusion of nomads into regions situated further south. Massaga (Arr. Anab. 4.26.1–27.4; 28.4; Ind. 1.8; Curt. 8.10.22 [Mazaga]; Strab. 15.1.27 [Μασόγα]), applied by Strabo to the *basileion*, the capital, of the country of the Assakenians, recalls – as does also the tribal name itself – the appellation Massagetae (Litvinsky 1969: pp. 119–120), and the same is true of the names of princelings such as Assacanus (Arr. Anab. 4.27.4; 30.5; Curt. 8.10.22) and Assagetes (Arr. 4.28.6). All these personal, ethnic, and place names are encountered south of the Hindukuš in the Achaemenid province of Gandāra. The fact that descendants of nomadic groups could be found as settlers in this region by the fourth century BCE was probably the result of a long process of deep interpenetration between nomads and sedentaries.

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NOTES

- 1 An interesting attempt to reconcile also the narrative of Ctesias (F 9: 7 [Lenfant]) with that reconstruction was undertaken by Nagel (1982: p. 63) and cf. Jacobs (2010: p. 6).
- 2 Rollinger (2014: pp. 198–200) has argued that the crossing of “the sea” drew on an old ideologeme and that the report is therefore not to be taken as historic.
- 3 The pointed hat of Skunkha does not identify him as a *Saka tigraxayda*. Although Miller pleads for this identification, she is quite right when stating that “the nationalities of Scythians on Persian reliefs are still problematic; although three names are recorded, the types of hat do not neatly fall into three mutually exclusive and distinguishable categories” (Miller 1991: p. 62).
- 4 For an interpretation also of the Masistes episode (Hdt. 9.108–113) as an indication of the adherence of the Saka territories to Bactria, cf. Briant (1982: pp. 207, 210–211) and Jacobs (1994: pp. 209–212).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors are very grateful to Christopher Tuplin for his assistance with the English version of this chapter. Birgit Gufler’s work was supported by funds of the Österreichische Nationalbank (Oesterreichische Nationalbank, Anniversary Fund, project number: 15819).

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- Lebedynsky, I. (2006). *Les Saces: Les "Scythes" d'Asie, VIIIe siècle av. J.-C.–IVe siècle apr. J.-C.* Paris: Éditions Errance. Gives an overview of the history and culture of Central Asian Sacae peoples from the ninth century BCE to Late Antiquity.
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CHAPTER 51

The Iranian East

Sören Stark

Environment

The lands of eastern Iran are situated in the eastern Iranian plateau, in the Turanian basin and in the Hindu Kush and Pamir-Alay mountains. Environmental features as well as cultural traditions vary considerably throughout this area. Most regions of the Iranian east, however, center on irrigation oases in river plains. These oases border either the desert-steppes in the plains or piedmonts, both of which were predominantly inhabited by mobile pastoralists which in turn entertained close economic and sociocultural links with the oasis populations. In addition, regions such as Choresmia and Sogdiana – and to a lesser degree also Margiana and parts of Parthia and Bactria – formed a complex frontier zone with the nomadic populations of the Eurasian steppes. Complex strategies of resource exploitation and sociopolitical interaction are also characteristic for the highlands of eastern Iran, involving irrigated and rain-fed agriculture, transhumant stockbreeding, and mining.

Problem of Sources

Our understanding of the history of eastern Iran and western Central Asia within the Achaemenid Empire is severely hampered by the paucity of written, and in particular narrative, sources directly relating to the Achaemenid east. A main problem is the limited perspective inherent to narratives related by

contemporary Greek historians: the lands east and northeast of the great Iranian deserts were far away and only indirectly – if at all – linked to events in which classical authors were primarily interested. As a result, evidence about the Achaemenid east derived from classical sources often remains laconic, vague, and is unevenly distributed chronologically. While there are important data for the reigns of Darius I and Xerxes I, and for the early years of Artaxerxes I, we hear almost nothing about the Iranian east for the following 120 or so years down to the reign of Darius III. Only in the context of the empire's military collapse during the reign of Darius III do classical texts again throw a sudden spotlight on eastern Iran and western central Asia (in fact, this is the most detailed narrative documentation for the Iranian east for the next 1000 years!) (Jacobs 2011).

The problem of uneven chronological distribution of written evidence is further aggravated by the extant epigraphic material from within the Achaemenid realm. The only narrative account from the perspective of the central government, the Bisutūn inscription, dates to the early years of Darius I. To the same reign date, beside other inscriptions of some relevance, are the Persepolis Fortification tablets. After Darius I, however, we are essentially left with highly standardized provincial lists. Even the important new corpus of Aramaic documents from Bactria, apparently dating from the reign of Artaxerxes III down to Alexander, cannot bridge the large gap of written evidence for the Iranian east during the second half of the fifth and the first half of the fourth century BCE. Currently, only archeological materials are available to fill this gap. But this category of sources presents a number of interpretational problems of its own (see Chapter 23 The Empire's Northeast).

The Establishment of Achaemenid Rule in Eastern Iran

The Iranian east seems to have entered into the orbit of Achaemenid politics with the submission of leaders from Hyrcania, Parthia, the Saka, and the Bactrians to Cyrus immediately after the fall of Ecbatana in 547 BCE (Ctes. F 8d-46). However, Cyrus turned his full attention toward the lands east of Media only after his campaign against Lydia, as he left Lydia in spring 546 BCE for Ecbatana “for his mind was on Babylon and the Bactrians¹ and the Saka and the Egyptians, against whom he intended to lead an expedition in person” (Hdt 1.153).

Unfortunately, our knowledge of Cyrus' campaigns in the east is extremely scanty. The only direct sources available are Herodotus, the fragments of Ctesias, and – for some very few glimpses – later classical authors. But none of these sources offers any coherent narrative regarding the course of events.

Even the basic chronological framework is, in view of contradictory evidence, a matter of debate – in particular the question of whether Cyrus' operations against the "Saka" and the "Bactrians" took place before or after the conquest of Babylon (540–539 BCE).² Also the actual extent of Cyrus' conquests in eastern Iran is very much a matter of conjecture. In the Bisutūn inscription, Darius I claims that Hyrcania, Parthia, Aria, Drangiane, Arachosia, Sattagydia, Gandāra, Bactria, Sogdia, and Choresmia were already part of the empire before his rise to power (DB § 6). An isolated piece of information is provided by a document from Uruk, which mentions a Choresmian messenger in Persian services as early as 534 BCE (Dandamayev 1992: pp. 164–165). This might indicate that Cyrus returned from his eastern campaigns with new Central Asian conscripts which he subsequently employed in the conquest of Babylon.

In addition, there are hints at the establishment by Cyrus of a cluster of garrison sites in the frontier zone at the middle Syr Daryā (Arr. 4.2.2.; 4.3.1; Cur. 7.6.16, 19; Just. 12.5.12; Strabo 11.11.4). The most important of these, Cyropolis, bore the name of its founder. Another one, called Gazaka (in Greek rendering), was probably the place of a storehouse (OP **ganza* – treasury) for the deposition of tariffs and taxes from which the Persian frontier garrisons were paid.

Apparently, the newly conquered territories in the east were considered strategically important acquisitions and consequently received particular attention: Cyrus installed his younger son, Bardiya, in Bactra as a sort of vice-king, exempt from paying tribute to the central court (Briant 1984: pp. 75–76). It seems as if the purpose of this appointment was both to secure this important position within the royal family and to offer compensation to a potential rival of the heir-apparent.

On the ground, however, the phase of the Achaemenid conquest of eastern Iran is – perhaps not surprisingly – barely detectable. A major rebuilding of the citadel of Old-Qandahār has been dated to the reign of Cyrus (Helms 1997: pp. 90–92), but this is far from certain. An early-Achaemenid date has convincingly been suggested for the foundation of Marakanda-Samarkand and its fortifications (Иневаткина 2002; Грене and Рахманов 2007). Especially in local and non-elite contexts (for instance, in ceramic sequences or in hydraulic technologies), the material culture of regions such as Margiana, Sogdiana, and Bactria is essentially shaped by local traditions and, hence, by continuities from the pre-Achaemenid to the Achaemenid horizon (Francfort 2005). However, there can be no doubt that the newly installed satrapal administration projected Persian authority into the wider region of Eastern Iran, aiming to guarantee the supply of garrisons, the collection of tributes, and the levy of troops used in campaigns of the Great Kings. In some cases – like with the Ariaspi in present-day Sistān – Achaemenid control was based on particular

treaties granting permanent tax exemption in return for submission and support (Arr. 3.27.4–5; Curt. 7.3.1–3).

But even with the assumed cooperation of local elites Persian rule seems to have faced difficulties at the northeastern frontier of the empire. Again, little is known about this beyond the fact that in 530 BCE Cyrus was campaigning in person in the east (Hdt. 1.205–207). As mentioned above, it is not even entirely clear whether this campaign was part of Cyrus' initial conquests in the east or a response to renewed hostilities. What is clear, however, is that this time his primary foe was the Massagetae, a strong nomadic grouping, probably situated in the Trans-Caspian steppes (Vogelsang 1992: p. 235). Although Herodotus and Ctesias present Cyrus as the aggressor, their representation could have been motivated to explain Cyrus' ultimate failure. In fact, it might well have been the continuous menace of nomadic raiding in eastern Iran (similar to Turkmen raids in approximately the same area until the beginning of the twentieth century) that ultimately forced Cyrus to take action. Greek accounts of this expedition are so heavily interwoven with legends that it is difficult to perceive the facts behind them. What is clear is that the Persian army was confronted by an enemy who successfully implemented a highly mobile war tactic. As a result, the Persians finally suffered a humiliating defeat during which the founder of their empire lost his life.

Eastern Iran and the Accession of Darius I

The “time of troubles” (Hdt. 3.150) following the violent accession of Darius I to the throne in 522 BCE was also felt in the Iranian east (Vogelsang 1998; Briant 2002: pp. 114–122). But on the eastern Iranian plateau and in western Central Asia open revolts remained limited to a single zone, namely the regions just south of the Karakum desert: Hyrcania, Parthia, and Margiana. It seems hardly a coincidence that all these regions directly border on the Transcaspian steppes, inhabited, most probably, by the Massagetae. Apparently, Persian control over the whole area had been only superficially restored in the aftermath of Cyrus' disastrous campaign of 530 BCE. Taking advantage of the chaotic situation at the center, local elites either sided with rebellious contenders in neighboring regions, as was the case with the Parthians and Hyrcanians who defected to the Median rebel Fravartiš (DB § 35),³ or supported a local candidate, as in Margiana where a certain Frāda was proclaimed “king” (DB § 38).

Apparently, Darius' final success in putting down these rebellions was to no small degree due to his father, Hystaspes, who held a high military command in Parthia (DB §35) and ensured the allegiance of the Persian troops stationed in this region to Darius. Perhaps Hystaspes' presence in the east was also

instrumental in securing the loyalty of two important satraps in eastern Iran: Vivāna in Arachosia and Dādarši in Bactria. Both responded to Darius' orders, which was crucial for crushing the rebellion in Margiana (DB §§38–39) and preventing a spread of Vahyazdāta's revolt into the southeast (DB §45).

In the following year (520/519 BCE) Darius campaigned in person against the “Sakā Tigraxaudā” (DB §74). It is not entirely clear where this campaign took place but most probably these Sakā “who wear the pointed cap” are identical with Herodotus' “Massagetae” against whom, nine years before, Cyrus had failed. Apparently, Darius was determined to deal, once and for all, with the danger these nomads posed to the northern frontiers of eastern Iran. This time the Persian troops were successful: they captured the leader of the enemy and Darius replaced him with a candidate loyal to him.

Achaemenid Rule in the Iranian East During the Reigns of Darius I and Xerxes I

By 519 BCE Darius' reconquest of the Iranian east was completed. The following eastern Iranian *dahyāva* appear on all of the existing “country lists” from the time of Darius I and Xerxes I (though in varying order): Parthia (Parthava), Aria (Haraiva), Bactria (Bāxtriš), Sogdiana (Suguda), Choresmia (Uvārazmī/Uvarazmīš), Drangiana (Zranka), Arachosia (Harauvatiš), and Gandāra (Vogelsang 1992: pp. 96–106). Some of these *dahyāva* seem to represent larger administrative units and must have included other regions not mentioned in the lists, such as Hyrcania (included in Parthia) and Margiana (included in Bactria). All these regions appear also – though in variant combination – among the tax-paying people in Herodotus' much discussed *nomoi*-list (Hdt. 3.66). For Bactria, this practice is now confirmed by an Aramaic document (dating to the last decades of Persian rule) mentioning “the rent of the king” (Naveh and Shaked 2006: p. 120).

Both Darius and, later, Xerxes continued the older practice of installing a younger brother of the heir-apparent as satrap in Bactra. An Elamite tablet from the citadel of old Qandāhar seems to indicate that the satrapal administration quickly introduced administrative practices from the heartland into regional contexts to create – at least in certain administrative sectors (such as the organization of travel along the “royal roads”) – a unified imperial system (Briant 2002: p. 448).

According to the foundation charters from Susa, precious raw materials from Bactria, Arachosia, Sogdiana, and Choresmia were used as building materials. In addition, the Persepolis Fortification tablets regularly mention *kurtaš* from the Iranian east or travelers from or to the east (Henkelman and Stolper 2009: pp. 300–306). Note that representatives of various eastern

dahyāvu are identified per inscription at Tomb I (Darius I) in Naqš-e Rostam (DNe), Tomb V at Persepolis (A³Pb; Artaxerxes III?), on the pedestal of the Darius statue from Susa, and on Darius' Canal stelae (Vogelsang 1992: pp. 142–145).

On a different plan, contingents from eastern Iran figured again and again in the Persian army, either during the Persian campaigns in Greece or as military colonists in Babylonia, Armenia, Cappadocia, Lydia, and even faraway Elephantine. To facilitate and secure these movements, a network of roads, stations, and fortresses span the Iranian plateau and Central Asia.

Finally, the eastern Iranian satrapies – especially Bactria and Sogdiana – seem to have been an area where exiles and prisoners of war from the western territories of the realm were frequently resettled or deported: Prisoners from Barca (in Cyrenaica) were settled in a Bactrian village while the deliberate exile of the Miletian Branchidae ended in Sogdiana. Tellingly, Ionian rebels were threatened by the Persians that their daughters would be “carried off to Bactria” (Hdt. 6.9).

The Iranian East from Artaxerxes I to Darius III

For the second half of the fifth into the thirties of the fourth century BCE information from written sources about the east is extremely sparse. But silence regarding matters on the Iranian east does not justify the assumption that the eastern satrapies were of lesser importance to the Great Kings than other territories of their realm. In particular, Bactria continued to be important to the dynasty and, at times of dynastic struggle, a resourceful basis for contenders to the throne. Thus, early in his reign Artaxerxes I was forced to focus entirely “on Upper (country) affairs” (Plut. Them. 31.2) because the satrap in Bactra – most likely Artaxerxes' brother, Hystaspes (Diod. 11.69.2) – rose in revolt. Apparently, Artaxerxes campaigned in person in the east until “all of Bactria surrendered to him” (Ctes. F14-35).

Perhaps this was not the only military campaign carried out by the central authority in the “Upper Satrapies” during the decades between the accession of Artaxerxes I and the final fight against Alexander – even though none is mentioned in any extant classical source. There is ample evidence for battle and triumph scenes from seals and sealings, depicting Persian victory over enemies wearing costumes typical for northeastern Iranians and central Asian people, in particular Saka, Choresmians, and Sogdians (Wu 2010: pp. 557–560). Some of these seals seem to date to the second half of the fifth century BCE and might commemorate successful Persian campaigns in the east (although it cannot be excluded that these scenes celebrate Persian triumph over enemies from the northeast in a more generic sense). Another hint for

eastern campaigns could be a short note on a Babylonian astronomical diary tablet reporting that in the spring of 369 BCE “the king mustered his [troops] for battle in the land Razaundu” (probably identical with Rhazounda east of Ecbatana in Ptol. 6.2.12 – see Kuhrt 2007: p. 400). Unfortunately, it is not clear from this short notice where these troops were heading, but they might well represent Median contingents to be sent eastward on the “Khorasan road.”⁴ Some more evidence for trouble in the northeast of the empire comes from two recently published Aramaic documents from Bactria (one of them dating to the year 348/347 BCE). Both documents mention the building of “walls” and “ditches” around cities in Bactria or Sogdiana, perhaps against nomadic incursions (Naveh and Shaked 2006: pp. 17, 24–25). This wall building seems to be confirmed by archeological evidence regarding a substantial reconstruction of fortifications at Afrasiab (Marakanda) and Koktepa in Sogdiana a few years before the end of Achaemenid rule (Rapin 2007: p. 42).

Only for the years during and shortly after the reign of Darius III are we suddenly provided in the context of Alexander’s campaigns with a number of valuable data which shed light on the topography, ethnography, and administration of the “Upper countries” during the final years of Achaemenid rule. In particular, the historians of Alexander reveal the existence of half-autonomous tribes in mountainous regions and – especially in Bactria and Sogdiana – the power of local aristocrats (called “hyparchs” in the Greek sources). Their resistance proved a major challenge to Alexander and forced him into prolonged guerilla warfare in Bactria and Sogdiana.

The End of Achaemenid Rule in the Iranian East

With the dethronement and murder of Darius III in July 330 BCE near the Caspian Gates, Achaemenid rule over the Iranian east entered its final stage. Being a member of the Achaemenid clan and supported by a strong contingent of Bactrian horsemen, Bessus, the satrap of Bactria and one of the plotters against Darius, was named “hegemon” of the remaining Achaemenid forces (Arr. 3.21.4) and retired to his satrapy. There he donned the royal robe and tiara and assumed the royal name “Artaxerxes” as “king over Asia” (Arr. 3.24.3), attempting to continue Achaemenid rule over the Iranian east. But this attempt was soon doomed to failure: Alexander quickly put down a pro-Bessus rebellion in Aria and then wiped out Bessus’ ally in the south, the satrap of Arachosia and Drangiana, thereby isolating Bessus and confining him to his own satrapy. In spring 329 BCE Alexander eventually crossed the passes over the Hindu Kush, quickly advanced into Bactria, and left Bessus no choice other than to give up Bactria and to retreat to the territories north of

the Oxus, where he hoped to find allies among the Sogdians, the Choresmians, and the “Scythians dwelling beyond the river Tanais” (Curt. 7.4.6). But this proved to be a disastrous move as most of his 7000 or 8000 Bactrian horsemen were not willing to follow him thither and, instead, “slipped away, each to his own village” (Curt. 7.4.20). Deserted by his most valuable forces it soon became apparent that Bessus, despite being proclaimed “king,” did not enjoy enough authority among the hyparchs in Sogdiana. When Alexander continued his pursuit, Bessus was arrested by the Sogdian nobles of his own entourage in the region of Nautaca (near today Shahri-Sabz) and finally handed over to Alexander (Arr. 3.29–30; Curt. 7.5.20–26). This ended, once and for all, the rule of members of the Achaemenid royal house over the territories in the Iranian east – although it took Alexander another two and a half years of campaigning to finally assert some degree of control over Sogdiana and Bactria.

Regional Overview

Bactria (Bāxtriš)

The satrapy of Bactria occupied a particularly prominent place among the eastern dominions of the Achaemenids. At times, the satrap of Bactria seems to have held a position somewhat comparable to a “vice-king of the east,” with competencies reaching far beyond Bactria proper. This is particularly clear for Bardiya, who is called “*despotes* of the Bactrians, Choramnians (i.e. Choresmians), Parthians, and Carmanians” (Ctes. F9-8). Still the last Achaemenid satrap of Bactria, Bessus, seems to have held a more prominent position than his satrapal colleagues in the east.

The satrap’s main residence was located in Bactra (today Balkh), apparently on the present-day citadel of Bālā Hissār. Recent archeological investigation has finally confirmed that the site dates back at least to the Achaemenid period (Besenval and Marquis 2007: p. 1867). Bactra also housed one of the cult statues of Anāhita, erected by order of Artaxerxes II (FGrH 680 F11). Other important cities in the satrapy were Varnu (Greek Aornos), Khulm, and Drapsaka. Recent findings of Aramaic documents, dating to the last decades of Achaemenid rule and possibly stemming from the satrapal archive at Bactra, give us rare insights into the organization and daily practice of Achaemenid rule in Bactria (see Chapter 66 Bactria).

Bactria was closely linked with the imperial centers: travelers to and from Bactria are frequently mentioned in the Persepolis Fortification Tablets (Henkelman and Stolper 2009: p. 301). In addition, Bactra is mentioned as the eastern terminus of a major road coming from Ephesus (Ctes. F 33). It must have been this road on which, according to Diodorus, it took four months for an army to march from Cilicia to Bactria (Diod. 14.20.4).

The importance of Bactria seems to be also reflected by the role Bactrian contingents played within the Achaemenid army: in Greece they were commanded by a brother of the Great King and formed, together with the Persians, Medes, and Saka, the core corps of the expeditionary army. In addition, some hints point to the settlement of military colonists from Bactria in Lydia and Cappadocia (Briant 1984: pp. 92–94).

Sogdiana (Suguda)

Sogdiana was very much a frontier region with close links to the open steppes beyond the Syr Daryā as well as to the mountain systems of High Asia. Although the population was concentrated in the river oases of the Middle Zerafshān (Marakanda/Samarkand), and the Kashka Daryā (Xenippa/Qarshi and Nautaca/Shahri-Sabz and Kitab), sizable groups of population lived as mobile stockbreeders – predominantly around the lower Zerafshān and toward the Middle Syr Daryā.

In terms of administration, Sogdiana apparently was connected with Bactria. At least in the days of Darius III, the satrap of Bactria held some military responsibilities in Sogdiana as he commanded the Sogdian contingents at Gaugamela. He was probably also involved in providing the central government with tributes (perhaps partially paid in rare mineral resources, such as carnelian and lapis lazuli; see DSf and DSz §10) and with workmen (Henkelman and Stolper 2009: p. 306). But how far his administration penetrated into Sogdiana is difficult to judge: we hear of a “royal residence” (*basileia*) in Marakanda-Samarkand (Arr. 3.30.6) which might have served as a satrapal headquarters in Sogdiana. There was also an extensive *paradeisos* near Marakanda (perhaps near present-day Penjikent in Tajikistan: Ešonkulov 2004). In addition, recently discovered Aramaic documents have been interpreted as evidence that the satrap of Bactria exerted close control over Sogdiana (perhaps even owning domains there), although there are some problems with this interpretation (Naveh and Shaked 2006: pp. 17, 24–25). However that may be, an important role was certainly played by local aristocratic families. Their powerful position was based on the control of territories which were densely populated, rich in farm produce, and clustered around strongly fortified residences (Briant 1984: p. 84). In addition, they could draw on sizable contingents of nomadic warriors as allies.

Margiana (Marguš)

Achaemenid Margiana was centered in the delta of the Murghāb, which empties into the Karakum desert. Written data concerning this region are extremely rare. It appears only in the Bīsutūn inscription (DB § 38) but not among the various “country lists” as it was probably administered by the satrap in Bactria.

In addition, Margiana was apparently located somewhat off the major lines of communication between Media and Bactria. That is why the Murghāb delta was not on Alexander's route and is consequently not mentioned by the historians of Alexander.⁵

Thus, only archeological data can help to cast some light on the region during Achaemenid rule. These seem to confirm that the citadel of medieval Merv – a round site similar to Bālā-Hissār in Balkh, today called Erk-kala – was founded during the Achaemenid period (Usmanova 1992).

Choresmia (Uvārazmī or Uvārazmīš)

Choresmia at the lower Amu Daryā was the most distant of the eastern Iranian *dahyāva*. Like Sogdiana it entertained close links with mobile pastoralists in the Eurasian steppe lands – predominately, via the Ustyurt Plateau, with those in the southern Urals. Close links also existed with the Chirik-rabat culture at the lower Syr Daryā.

From Choresmia the central government received turquoise (DSf and DSz §10). But more importantly, Choresmian soldiers appear widely in Persian services (in Babylonia, Greece, and Elephantine). From the lack of mention of Choresmian contingents in the Persian army rosters in the time of Darius III, and in particular from the existence of a certain Pharasmanes as “king of Choresmia” submitting to Alexander (Arr. 4.15.5), it has been concluded that Choresmia gained independence at some point after the reign of Xerxes I. But probably Achaemenid rule over Choresmia was generally of a more indirect nature than elsewhere in eastern Iran and largely content with the payment of tributes and the supply of troops, otherwise leaving domestic affairs largely to local dynasts. Thus, it seems as if Pharasmanes' symbolic submission to Alexander mirrors traditional patterns of Achaemenid rule over the region (Vogelsang 1992: p. 233).

Important archeological sites attributed to the “Achaemenid period” in Choresmia are Kyuzeli-gyr and Dingil'dzhe (Воробьева 1973; Вишнеvская and Рапопорт 1997).

Parthia (Parthava) and Hyrcania (Varkāna)

Parthia and Hyrcania, just south of the Karakum desert, seem to have formed one administrative unit and were obviously conquered already by Cyrus. Both Hyrcanians and Parthians served in Xerxes' army in Greece, and Parthian “lance-bearers” seem to appear in the Persepolis tablets (Henkelman and Stolper 2009: p. 306). In addition, Hyrcanian cavalrymen were stationed in several places in Asia Minor (Briant 2002: p. 794).

Little is known about the organization of Achaemenid rule on a satrapal level beyond the fact that – at least by the time of Darius III – Parthia-Hyrcania

had its own satrap. His official residence (*basileia*) in Hyrcania was a fortified place called Zadrakarta (Arr. 3.25.1). An isolated piece of information (Polyb. 10.28.2–4) tells us that the Achaemenid administration in Hyrcania was involved in the maintenance of sophisticated underground irrigation works.

Aria (Haraiva)

Achaemenid rule over Aria, the region around present day Herāt in western Afghanistan, is first mentioned *expressis verbis* in the Bīsutūn inscription, although it is most probable that this region was already subdued by Cyrus. Only during the time of Darius III do we hear of a “satrap of the Arians,” named Satibarzanes (Arr. 3.8.4). His residence (*basileia*) was at a site called Artakoana (Arr. 3.25.5), which is generally located on the citadel of present-day Herat. Aria provided troops for Xerxes I’s campaign in Greece (Hdt. 7.66), Darius III’s campaign in 331 BCE. Arians also appear in the second half of the fifth century BCE as military colonists in documents from the Murašū archive in Nippur (Dandamayev 1992: pp. 162–164). Several Persepolis tablets mention travelers to and from Aria without specifying their ethnicity or function (Henkelman and Stolper 2009: p. 301).

Drangiana (Zranka)

Drangiana was centered around the lower Hīlmand-rūd. Known as a rich agricultural oasis and for its tin deposits (Strab. 15.2.10), it was also important as a transit area, joining the “Khorasan road” (into Bactria) with the “Kerman road” (into Sind).

Drangiana features first in the Bīsutūn inscription as *dahyu*, but a certain “tribe” of the Ariaspi, living along the Hīlmand-rūd, is mentioned already in the context of Cyrus’ conquests (Arr. 3.27.4–5; Curt. 7.3.1–3). In 330 BCE Drangiana was part of the satrapy of Arachosia (Arr. 3.21.1). Drangians served in Xerxes’ army in Greece (Hdt. 7.66) and a certain “Ašpukka, the Drangian” is mentioned in the Persepolis Fortification Tablets as traveling from Persis back to Drangiana (Henkelman and Stolper 2009: p. 303).

The archeological site of Dahan-i Ghūlāmān has been interpreted as the Achaemenid capital of the region (Genito 2010).

Arachosia (Harauvatiš)

Achaemenid rule of Arachosia was exerted as early as 522 BCE by a satrap (DB III § 45, 47). Based on archeological evidence, the satrapal seat has been assumed to be on the citadel of old Qandahār. Perhaps this site is identical with the fortress Kapišākaniš, mentioned in DB III § 45 (Bernard 1974). In

addition, we know from the Elamite version of the Bīsutūn inscription that the satrap also held a fortress named Aršādā as “estate” (*irmatam*), probably serving as a collection, storage, and distribution center for local commodities from a surrounding agricultural domain (Briant 2002: pp. 444–445).

Arachotians served in Xerxes I’s army and at Gaugamela, where Barsaentes, the “satrap of the Arachotians and the Drangians” (Arr. 3.21.1), commanded also “Indian hillmen” (Arr. 3.8.3–40). The precise location of these “Indians” somewhere between Qandahār and Gandāra is a matter of debate, but most probably they are identical with the *dahyu* of *Thataguš* (Petrie and Magee 2007).

In addition, Arachosia sent *kurtaš* to the central court (Henkelman and Stolper 2009: p. 300) and paid taxes. Some stone mortars and pestles found in the Persepolis treasury have been identified as coming from Arachosia (Bernard 1972). Another item of tribute from Arachosia was ivory (DSf and DSz §11), once again pointing to close connections to “India.”

Paropamisadae and Gandāra

The mountainous territories to the south of the Hindu Kush divide, i.e. the lands around present-day Kābul (Paropamisadae) in the west and the Peshāwar and Swat valleys in the east (Gandāra), are very much a transitional zone between the Iranian east and the cultural sphere of northwest India (Punjab). The main regional centers were the site of Kapiši (Capisa) in Paropamisadae and Puskalāvati (Peucelaotis) in Gandāra. Archeological data (mostly ceramic assemblages) point to a rather regionalized character of economic interaction spheres (Magee and Petrie 2010: pp. 514–515).

There are some faint hints that Cyrus campaigned in the Kābul area (Plin. nat. 6.25.92); slightly later, Gandāra appears as a *dahyu* in the Bīsutūn inscription (DB § 6). Presumably, the Bactrian satrap held some responsibilities over the region (Vogelsang 1992: pp. 221–223; Briant 2002: p. 746), which also dispatched *kurtaš* to the heartland (Henkelman and Stolper 2009: p. 303). But regional affairs seem to have been mainly in the hands of local dynasts (Vogelsang 1992: p. 236; Briant 2002: pp. 756–757; Petrie and Magee 2007).

NOTES

- 1 Francfort (1988: pp. 170–171) opts for a date after the conquest of Babylon while Briant (2002: pp. 38–40) maintains the chronological order as presented by Herodotus.
- 2 On the much-disputed question of the existence and character of a pre-Achaemenid polity in “Greater Bactria” see Briant (1984: pp. 23–33).
- 3 However, this notice has also been linked with Artaxerxes II’s war against the Cadusians – see Kuhrt (2007: p. 400).

- 4 Perhaps because of older political traditions – see Boucharlat et al. (2005).
- 5 The identification of Curtius Rufus' (7.10.15) "urbs Margania" or "urbs Marginia" (near which Alexander is said to have installed six garrisons) with "Margiana" is certainly not correct (Sverchkov 2008: pp. 166–173).

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CHAPTER 52

India

Kai Ruffing

Discussing Persian rule in India raises the problem of defining the region that is meant using the geographical term “India.” Thus the Republic of India is not identical with what the ancients called India. In fact, the modern name India derives from the Old Persian word *Hinduš*, which itself was taken from the Indian languages, in which the toponym *Sindh* was used. In Greek, *Hinduš* became Ἰνδός and Ἰνδία, designating the river and the surrounding region. The Romans used these toponyms too and in this way they were introduced into the languages of our times. In modern research scholars use a broader concept of India at least deriving from Classical literature, which includes the Khabul Valley, Gandhara, the Punjab, and the lower part of the Indus Valley (Dihle 1998: pp. 1–2) that are mainly parts of Afghanistan and Pakistan. The Achaemenid kings, on the contrary, by using the toponym *Hinduš* in the royal inscriptions evidently intended only the lower and the middle Indus Valley. The northern parts of India, as understood in a broader sense by classical literature, are referred to in the royal inscriptions as *Tataguš* and *Gaṇdāra* (Callieri 2006: p. 8). If not otherwise stated here, the wider connotation of India is used. Geographically, India is separated from the Iranian plateau by mountains, which are the western border of the Indus Valley (Vogelsang 1990: p. 98; Jacobs 1994: p. 265; Callieri 2006: p. 8). There are a lot of passes connecting Iran and India. Notably a northern route from Gandhara – around modern Peshawar – existed across the Hindu Kush to Bactria, a central route from the Indus Valley across the Soleiman mountains to Arachosia around modern Kandahar, and a southern route from the lower

Indus Valley to Carmania and from there to the Persis (Vogelsang 1990: p. 95). The good connectivity resulting from these passes, and supposingly from sea routes too, fostered intensive contacts between Iran and India.

The chronology of the Persian conquest of all these regions is anything but certain. Furthermore, the details regarding their incorporation into the Achaemenid Empire remain obscure. From Herodotus we know that Cyrus II was campaigning in Central Asia after he had left Asia Minor (Hdt. 1.177). Given the poor evidence provided by our sources, one can only guess that Cyrus on one of his campaigns in Central Asia found an occasion to cross the Hindu Kush and to subdue the northern parts of India. At least one can safely assume that the list of peoples named by Darius I in the Bīsutūn inscription as part of his empire is a result of the campaigns of Cyrus in these regions. Among the lands listed here we find *Tataguš* and *Gaⁿdāra* (DB § 3). Thus we may conclude that both lands were conquered by Cyrus sometime after the 540ies BCE or 539 BCE (Briant 2002: pp. 38–40; Jacobs 1994: p. 36).

The lower Indus Valley then was subdued by Darius I himself. In this respect the royal inscriptions give clear evidence. One peculiar feature of the royal inscriptions of Darius and of one inscription of Xerxes are the so-called *dahyāva* lists. The term *dahyu* refers either to lands or to peoples or to peoples dwelling in a certain region. The exact meaning of the word and the exact significance of the *dahyāva* lists are debated in modern research (Briant 2002: pp. 172–173; Jacobs 2003). Nevertheless, with the exception of the Bīsutūn inscription, the *dahyu Hinduš* is adduced in all inscriptions of Darius containing such lists (DNA; DPe; DSe; DSaa; see also DSab with a hieroglyphic land-list mentioning India) as well as in the one inscription of Xerxes (XPh). This means a Persian conquest of the Indus Valley took place sometime after settling down the revolts which broke out in the Persian Empire during the takeover of power staged by the first Achaemenid on the Persian throne. Further evidence is provided by Herodotus in a somewhat complicated manner. According to the Halicarnassian, Darius wished to know where the estuary of the Indus was situated. Thus he ordered Scylax of Caryanda (FGrH 709) to undertake an expedition down the Indus and from the estuary to Egypt (but see West 2012). After this expedition – as Herodotus puts it – Darius subdued the Indians and made a voyage on the sea (Hdt. 4.44). Although the Herodotean account raises some problems of geographical detail, one may be inclined to see his narrative as a reflection of Persian operations in the lower Indus Valley around 518 or 515 BCE (Vogelsang 1992: p. 207; Jacobs 1994: p. 265; Briant 2002: p. 140; Rollinger 2012).

Having been incorporated into the Achaemenid Empire, India became an important part of the spatial self-representation of Darius. He imagined the kingship as a universal one: The king presented himself on an ideological level as ruler of the world. In this concept *Hinduš* represented the southeastern edge of the inhabited world, its counterpart on the northwestern edge being

Lydia (DH_a; DPh). The graphical representation of Indians on the throne-bearer reliefs (DNe; A³Pb) as well as the Indian delegation staged on the tribute friezes of the staircases of the Apadana in Persepolis (delegation 18) are to be seen in the same ideological context (Briant 2002: pp. 173–175), which is not to be understood as a claim for a real domination of the whole world (Wieschöfer 2007: pp. 34–40). The same is true for the mention of Indian ivory used for the construction of Darius' palace in Susa (DSf § 11) and the building of the Apadana there (DSz § 10).

After incorporation into the Persian Empire, *Hinduś* became part of the administrative system like *Tataguś* and *Gaⁿdāra*. The presence of Indians with administrative tasks such as carrying a sealed document from India to Susa is attested in the Persepolis Fortification Tablets (PF 1318; see Giovinazzo 2000/2001: pp. 68–72). Furthermore, these sources give reason to suppose the existence of rather frequent contacts between *Hinduś* and the center of the empire (Giovinazzo 2000/2001: pp. 63–68, 72–74). *Hinduś* evidently became a satrapy of its own. At least, we find it the *dahyāva* lists as well as in lists of satrapies in Greek literature. In the Herodotean list of nomes of the Persian Empire, India represents the twentieth nome, which had to pay 360 talents of gold to the Great King (Hdt. 3, 94), an amount, according to the Halicarnassian, representing more than half of the tributes paid by all other nomes (Hdt. 3, 95). *Tataguś* and *Gaⁿdāra* are to be found as Sattagydae and Gandarioi in the seventh nome of the list (Hdt. 3.91.4). Although the exact meaning of this highly problematical list of nomes is intensively debated in modern scholarship (Ruffing 2009), the occurrence of the ethnonyms there as well as in the royal inscriptions can be interpreted as a reflection of the existence of at least two or three administrative districts in the region, which in the Classical sources is called India (Jacobs 1994: pp. 217–221, 235–247). Another hint for that is the presence of Indians in lists of the Persian army given by Herodotus (e.g. Hdt. 7.65; on these lists see Bichler 2007: pp. 76–78). The permanence of Achaemenid rule in *Hinduś* was sometime doubted by modern scholars, but Indians are mentioned as part of the troops of Darius III fighting against Alexander III (Kuhrt 2007: pp. 830–831).

Achaemenid rule in India and the way in which the Achaemenids imagined the extension of their empire in the royal inscriptions were an important feature for the development of the Greek geographical perception of the world. In the Greek construction of the oecumene, India became the southeastern corner of the world like in the imagination of space found in the royal inscriptions. Seemingly it was Skylax of Karyanda (on his “voyage” see West 2012) who localized fabulous people there, who were said to live on the edge of the world like the *Monophthalmoi* (the one-eyed) and the *Skiapodes* (those with shadow-providing feet). It was Hekataios of Miletus who developed first a concept of India as eastern fringe of the world (Zambrini 1982: pp. 104–109). His concept was criticized by Herodotus, to whom we owe a logos with a

highly literary description of India (Hdt. 3.98–105). Basic features of it were the abundance of gold guarded by dreadful ants and the copiousness of Indian peoples. Thus the Halicarnassian used the tributes of India as a main argument for supposing an abundance of money in the Persian treasury. Furthermore, he imagined India as an utopic fringe of the inhabited world, but contrary to his predecessors as well as to his successors he did not place there obviously fabulous people like those mentioned by Skylax (Ruffing 2010: pp. 355–358). His account was followed by the *Indika* of Ctesias of Knidos, who wrote his work at the beginning of the fourth century BCE. Ctesias is extremely important for the Greek views of India until the campaigns of Alexander III. He developed a very colorful picture of India, which to some degree supposingly is based on Indian realities (for a very optimistic view see Nichols 2011: pp. 13–27). But a main motive of his account is certainly to discuss Herodotean motifs, where Ctesias regularly maintains that the contrary of what Herodotus said is true. Besides that, one main feature of his description of India is the wealth it provided to the Persian king. Thus the India of Ctesias is an idiosyncratic mix of realities, perception of previous literature, and intentional history, since the *Indika* are to be seen in the context of his *Persika* and other minor works like the *Tributes of Asia* (Ruffing 2010). The campaigns of Alexander III gave reason for the development of a more complex picture of India in the Greek literature, which is impressed by Ctesian conceptions. But the experience of having been there with Alexander led to the development of new motifs and to a certain degree generated more precise geographical knowledge (Parker 2008: pp. 33–42).

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SECTION V

STRUCTURES AND COMMUNICATION

CHAPTER 53

Roads and Communication

Wouter F.M. Henkelman and Bruno Jacobs

Introduction: The Sources

As with any subject relating to the Achaemenid Empire, evidence on roads and communication comes from a mosaic of sources. Each of these presents an incomplete if not lopsided picture. Herodotus, for one, looking from late fifth century BCE Greece, mentions only one royal road, the one that connected Sardes to Susa (5.52–53). His interest was the degree of connectedness within (the western half of) the vast empire. Other Greek sources often focus on individual travelers rather than on the infrastructure as such. A notable exception is Xenophon's *Anabasis*, which offers much detail on the route taken in 401 BCE by Cyrus, satrap of Lydia, on his march against his brother, Artaxerxes II, and on that of the return march of the Greek mercenaries.

In contrast to the Greek evidence, the Elamite Fortification Tablets from Persepolis document an administrative perspective on traveling: the organization and accounting of rations given to travelers on official missions at the way stations along the roads. This institutional view is also found in the Aršāma correspondence and documents from Achaemenid Bactria. Together, all these sources offer a variegated yet patchy image of an empire-wide communication network (surveys: Graf 1994; Briant 2002: pp. 358–387, 927–930, id. 2012; Kuhrt 2007: pp. 730–762).

The available sources are not limited to the Achaemenid period. Testimonies of the campaign of Alexander are certainly relevant since the Macedonian

army in most cases used existing roads (Seibert 1985: pp. 15–27 map 2). As Seibert (1985: pp. 15–16) points out, there is only a single mention of Alexander commissioning road work of his own (Arr. *Anab.* 1.26.1). Without great risk of stretching their potential, sources from the time of the Diadochi can equally be drawn into the picture. Diodorus reports on the movement of troops between erstwhile Achaemenid residences in the years 320–310 BCE, specifying marching and traveling times (Briant 2002: pp. 357–358).

Development and Extension of the Road Network

The Persians could fall back on roads built by their predecessors (cf. Graf 1993: pp. 151), the Assyrians, Babylonians, Lydians, etc., but they were keenly aware that successful territorial expansion was possible only by simultaneous development of the communication network. Thus, Xenophon writes that military detachments were sent ahead of Cyrus the Great's army to construct roads, wherever needed (*Cyr.* 6.2.36).

A road system must already have been in place during the reign of Cyrus; building activities at Taoce suggest that sea routes were being developed (cf. below). During Darius' struggle for power, the "rebel" Vahyazdāta could already dispatch troops via a route leading from Persis to Arachosia (DB §45). Military contingents sent by Darius to quell the uprisings all over the empire apparently used existing connections and the Persepolis Fortification archive testifies to a smoothly-operated road system that in 509–493 BCE embraced the whole empire. Nevertheless, it was probably during the reign of Darius that the system reached the perfection praised by Herodotus, with "royal roadhouses and excellent inns" (σταθμοί ... βασιλῆιοι καὶ καταλύσεις κάλλισται) situated at intervals of a single day's traveling (5.52.1).

The Network of Royal Roads: The Textual Record

According to Herodotus, the Sardes–Susa highway ran through Lydia and Phrygia to the Halys river, cut through Cappadocia and Cilicia, crossed the Euphrates (maybe at Zeugma: Comfort et al. 2000), traversed Armenia, and then reached the Tigris. Having crossed the river, it took a southeastern direction between the Tigris and the foothills of the Zagros mountains, crossing the Upper and Lower Zab and the Diyala, before reaching Susa (Figure 53.1). The exact course of the road, especially its central and eastern Anatolian sections, remains debated. Whereas most scholars have assumed a northern trajectory, which crossed the Halys twice before reaching the Euphrates (e.g. Seibert 1985: pp. 18–20; Müller 1994: pp. 20–31), French has argued, on the



Figure 53.1 Roads in the Achaemenid Empire. Source: Drawing by Joaquín Velázquez Muñoz and the authors.

basis of Herodotus' phrasing, that the river was not crossed at all, that the road reached the Euphrates at Tomisa, and that it was the predecessor of a known Roman paved road (French 1998; cf. Graf 1994: pp. 177–179 on two possible northern routes). Herodotus' assertion that the length of the road through "Cilicia" was only 15.5 *parasangai* seems to contradict the second option since "Cilicia" must be identical with Strabo's Cappadocia at the Taurus (Καππαδοκία πρὸς τῷ Ταύρῳ; 12.1.4), to be located between the lower Halys and the Taurus range (Jacobs 1994: p. 141, map I; Herodotus' description excludes that "Cilicia" applies to the region south of the Taurus range).

Diodorus states that the stretch from Babylon to Susa took 22 days (19.55.2). The road did not end at Susa, however, as Herodotus thought, but continued to Persepolis and the Carmanian border (Strabo 2.1.23 [C 79]) and further into India, as is amply documented in the Fortification archive (Giovinazzo 2000/2001). Diodorus mentions 30 days for the distance between Susa and Persis (19.17.6). The exact course of this stretch of the road is debated, though it may be assumed that it circled Khūzestān via the Deh Lorān, Mīān āb, and Rām Hormoz plains, bent into Fārs in the Behbahān area, passed through the Fahliyān valley, and from there continued to the Marv Dašt and Persepolis (see, most recently, Speck 2002; Potts 2008).

A road through the Cilician Gates was taken in 401 BCE by Cyrus, satrap of Lydia (Briant 2002: p. 359). Where exactly this route branched off from the Sardes–Susa road is disputed and partially depends on the preferred reconstruction of the latter's course. When Cyrus' army had transcended the Taurus it turned eastward and traversed the Amanus and the Euphrates. Proceeding toward Babylonia via the eastern bank of that river seems surprising, as most cities adjoining it were situated on the western bank (Joannès 1995). It therefore remains unclear what kind of roads the army used when marching toward Cunaxa.

On their *katabasis* from the battlefield, the 10 000 mercenaries marched a short stretch to the east, crossed the Tigris, wheeled left, and followed the Sardes–Susa road in a northwestern direction for a short while but did not cross the Tigris at Arbela; instead, they headed north to the Black Sea. From there, the army sailed home by ship, assuming that the coastal route through Paphlagonia west of Cotyora could easily be blocked and because several river mouths, including that of the Halys, would have to be crossed (Xen. *Anab.* 5.6.7). This same road presumably continued further westward, from Heraclea to Dascylium in Hellespontine Phrygia (Seibert 1985: p. 20). It is this stretch that must have been taken by the satrap Pharnabazus when he rushed eastward, alarmed by the arrival of the 10 000 Greeks at Heraclea (Xen. *Anab.* 6.4.24). A few years earlier, Alcibiades, in his failed attempt to reach Paphlagonia (and the Great King), again seems to have used the road (Diod. 14.11.3–4).

Yet another road branching off the Sardes–Susa highway was the one that led from the Tigris crossing at Arbela into Syria and further south. It is documented by a papyrus in which Aršāma, satrap of Egypt, lists administrative centers, including Arbela, of regions to be crossed by his administrator, Nakhthor, on his way to Egypt (Driver 1957: no. 6 = Porten and Yardeni 1986: A6.9). According to Graf’s reconstruction, the last center mentioned, Damascus, was the nucleus of a net of roads crossing the Levant. One of these should have followed the Mediterranean shore down to Gaza, where it branched into a route to Egypt and another known as the “incense road,” which may largely have fallen outside the empire’s direct control but nevertheless was of prime economic importance. Another road may have crossed the Transjordanian realm from north to south (Graf 1993: pp. 155–166). A transversal road from Dor, via Megiddo, to Damascus connected the two arteries (Roll and Tal 2008: p. 222). The reconstruction of these roads used to be based largely on the assumption that they were continued in the Hellenistic road system, which in turn was the basis for the Roman network (see, e.g., Graf 1993; French 1998), but it is now supported by other sources. Ostraca from Tel Arad and other sites in Idumea document the provisioning of travelers and their animals and reveal a system similar to that known from the Fortification archive (Naveh 1981; Briant 2009: pp. 154–155). Surveys, analysis of settlement patterns, and the presence of fortresses provide additional clues (Roll and Tal 2008).

When they were still marching northward in the Tigris region, Cyrus’ Greek soldiers used a part of the road that connected Ephesus to Bactria and India. This highway is said to have been described in terms of way stations and distances by Ctesias (F33 Lenfant). A little bit further south it must have branched off eastward and followed the Great Khorāsān highway to Ecbatana – a stretch used by Darius III on his flight from Gaugamela (Strabo 2.1.24 [C 79]) – and thence continued to the Caspian Gates. There it entered the region later called Ariane (see below), from which it continued further east. The stretch leading to Bactria was taken by Darius III and, in his pursuit, Alexander (Arr. *Anab.* 3.20.1–21.10; Curt. 5.13).

At the Caspian Gates, at the latest, the Ephesus–India road met the road that, coming from the Black Sea (Sinope and Amisus), passed Colchis and reached the realm south of the Caspian Sea (Strabo 2.1.3 [C 68]). It may be that this artery directly connected to Ecbatana, whence a well-known road descended, via Gabae (Īzadkhast or Ābādeh area), to Persepolis and, ultimately, Taoce at the Persian Gulf. It was this road that Alexander took (in a northern direction) after his sojourn in Persis (Arr. *Anab.* 3.19.1–5; Curt. 5.7.12). According to Diodorus, traveling from Ecbatana to Persepolis took about 20 days (19.46.6).

Alternative north–south routes connected Ecbatana to Susa. One, which is said by Diodorus to have run via Babylonia, a rather long detour, required 40 days of travel; a more direct but also more difficult road, through the Zagros, connected the two residences in just nine days (Diod. 19.2.8).

Other trajectories are implied by the Fortification archive, such as the one from Sagartia to Fārs and/or Kermān. The toponyms mentioned in the relevant documents are usually the destination or origin of travel, but may also be intermediate points on a longer route: they are, essentially, nodal points in an empire-wide network of regional administrative centers authorized to issue travel documents. The mobile court counts as one of these centers and is referred to in the expression “travel authorization from the King.” Otherwise, the archive mentions Anšan (in Fārs), Arachosia (also: Barrikana, Puzantiš), Areia, Assyria, Babylon, Bactria, Cappadocia, Drangiana, Egypt, Gandhāra (also: Barubaresana, Kapišiya), Hinduš, Hyrcania, Kermān (also: Puruš), Lebanon, Lydia, Maka, Matezziš (near Persepolis), Media (also: Ecbatana), Parthia (?), Pasargadae, Persepolis (also: nearby Matezziš), Sagartia, Saka territory, Susa (also: Elam), Syria, Tamukkan (Taoce), and a few unidentified places (Koch 1993: pp. 5–48; Henkelman and Stolper 2009; Briant 2010: pp. 34–43; Henkelman 2017; id. 2020). It corrects Herodotus’ Greek perspective in showing the extensive connections to/from the eastern and northeastern parts of the empire.

Parallel to the network of land connections, a system of waterways existed. This is true not only for Egypt, where the Nile functioned as the most important line of communication (Hdt. 2.7–9; cf. Strabo 17.1.2), but also for the Euphrates, the Tigris, the canals of southern Mesopotamia, the canals and rivers crossing Khūzestān, the navigable rivers in Fārs (Potts 2014; cf. Diod. 17.67.4 on the [Pasi]tigris), and the Indus, which became an important route in the wake of Scylax’s (Hdt. 4.44; Schiwek 1962: pp. 8–13) and Alexander’s journeys (Arr., *Anab.* 6.1–19; cf. Strabo 15.1.32f.; Schiwek 1962: pp. 24–32, 35–39). Routes along the seashores are known to have been used during military campaigns, such as Cambyses’ invasion of Egypt, Darius’ campaign against the Scythians north of the Black Sea (513/12 BCE), and Xerxes’ campaign against the rebellious Greek city-states (480 BCE). Obviously, such routes also had their relevance for commerce and communication. An example is found in YOS 3, 10 (reign of Cyrus), on travel by boat from Uruk to Taḥmāka, i.e. the administrative center known in Greek sources as Taoce, in the Borāzḡān area, just off the Persian Gulf coast (Tolini 2008; Henkelman 2008a; cf. Chapter 62 Persia).

As long as the groups involved were small, traveling over water was considerably faster than traveling overland. An Athenian embassy led by Diotimus covered the distance from Cilicia to Susa mainly by boat (Strabo 1.3.1 [C 47]; Briant 1991: pp. 78–79). Traveling from Babylon to Susa was

preferentially done by water. Travelers sailed down the Tigris and then up the Nār Kabari (Waczegeers 2010: pp. 790, 804; Briant 2010: p. 43; cf. Strabo 15.3.4–5).

The evidence gathered here reveals a system of empire-wide communication which the Achaemenids continuously strove to maintain and develop. The journey of Scylax, on the orders of Darius, is a telling case against this background (Hdt. 4.44). After his arrival at the mouth of the Indus, Scylax sailed west to the Red Sea, implying the chartering of a sea route between India and Elam and the circumnavigation of the Arabian peninsula. The latter accomplishment is also documented in an inscription on the statue of Darius from Susa. Similarly, Darius lay stress on the opening of the “Suez Canal,” by which at least for a short time the Red Sea and the Mediterranean were connected (DZc §3).

Royal and Ancillary Roads

The *viae militares* used by Alexander during his campaign in Asia should, as a general rule, have been those roads which are termed *royal* in other sources. Smaller or secondary roads seem to have been perceived as different from these. A road of relatively lesser official status may have been the above-mentioned Susa to Ecbatana route through the Zagros mountains. The movements of goods and people within the area under purview of the Fortification archive suggest a dense local road network; one has to reckon with hundreds of ancillary routes which linked small towns, villages, and homesteads to the main arteries.

The difference between royal and ancillary roads does not lie in the fact that imperial roads were paved, as has been assumed repeatedly (Graf 1993: p. 150): the archeological record is mostly negative in this regard (Wiesehöfer 1993: p. 117; French 1998: p. 16; Briant 2002: p. 362–363; cf. below). Rather, it lay in the level of maintenance, which – especially after heavy rainfall – meant that the royal roads were more reliable. In addition, royal roads had way stations at regular intervals, which was probably not the case for (all) secondary roads. Another difference surely was that the royal roads were wider (Seibert 1985: p. 17), since they were made to serve larger military contingents as well as baggage trains with numerous vehicles (cf. Arr. *Anab.* 3.8.6). Xerxes is said to have traveled to Greece partly on a ἄρμα (probably a chariot), partly in a ἄρμάμαξα (probably a four-wheeled wagon; Hdt. 7.41). Diodorus describes the baggage train that followed the Persian army to Issus, including gilded vehicles (17.35.1–4, ἄρματα κατὰ χρυσά; cf. Curt. 3.36.22f., Diod. 17.35.5). Only wider and well-maintained roads would allow for the use of such means of transport.

The Institutional Perspective: Persis, Bactria, Palestine, and Egypt

Travelers on the roads could be officials, delegations from the satrapies, foreign embassies, fast messengers and detachments transporting taxes and tributes. Teams of dependent workers (*kurtaš*) and individual craftsmen were also sent to and from different parts of the empire (Briant 2010: pp. 40–42; Briant 2012: p. 192). The use of the network for long-distance trade is not documented, but that may be a function of the nature of our (institutional) sources. At any rate, much commerce may have been realized by boat. Similarly, the travels of Babylonian businessmen to Susa, presumably for fiscal purposes (Waezeggars 2010), would probably not be organized by the state.

All official travel took place on the basis of a sealed travel authorization (Elamite *halmi*, also *miyatukkam* = Old Persian **viyātika*-), typically issued by a satrap or the king and written in Aramaic. Journeys crossing several administrative regions might have required a super-authorization on the basis of which subsidiary authorizations were issued for each stretch of the road; Aršāma's letter on behalf of Nakhtōr (cf. above) could be read as such, but other solutions are possible as well. At any rate, authorizations could be replaced, as in the case of the 94 men traveling from Lydia to Persepolis, yet with an authorization from the satrap of Susa (NN 0901). The phenomenon may have been quite regular: behind some of the many documented travels to/from Susa and Persepolis, journeys to/from more distant centers may be hidden (Briant 2010: p. 36). Apart from Aršāma's letter, no actual travel authorizations have been preserved, but they are implied on a massive scale in the important corpus of tablets relating to travel within the Fortification archive (see Hallock 1969: pp. 40–45, 50; Giovino 1994; Tuplin 1998: pp. 77–102; Seibert 2002; Henkelman forthcoming). Some of the Arad ostraca seem to be terse orders for the allocation of rations; if so, they probably refer to local travel *or* they functioned as intermediate documents (based on the authorizations, and later used to draft receipts and accounts).

As shown by the Nakhtōr document, authorizations stipulated the number of travelers, their destination, and the quantities of commodities they received as travel rations at the way stations along the roads. An authorization sometimes was valid for the return journey as well (Briant 2012: p. 192). As the Fortification tablets show, separate receipts were drafted for each commodity at each way station and these were countersealed by the storekeeper and the traveler, the leader of the travel party or its guide. Fodder for horses and pack animals was also documented separately. Fortification texts on camel caravans, such as the one from Gandhāra to Susa (NN 0431), show that such transports were not limited to the trans-Arabian routes (cf. Arr. *Ind.* 43.1–5; Henkelman 2017: pp. 55–63).

Seals were essential to the process: even the most modest traveler was expected to have a personal seal. Rare cases whereby the traveler used an ear-ring or coin as makeshift mark confirm the rule (Root 2008: esp. pp. 89–93). Another striking aspect is that the satrapal and royal seals on the authorizations were, apparently, recognized throughout the empire.

Keeping the stores of the way stations filled with sufficient commodities was a giant logistic operation (cf. Ps.Arist. *Oec.* 2.2.38) and one of the main *raisons d'être* of regional institutional economies of the kind documented by the Persepolis archive. There is direct evidence for other administrations using Elamite documentation at Susa and Qandahār (Arachosia), and indirectly evidence for Ecbatana, Gabae, and Taoce (Henkelman 2008a, 2008b: pp. 78–79, 110–120, id. 2017). Apart from the Arad ostraca, there are Aramaic documents on leather and wooden tallies from fourth-century Bactria; they reveal, among other things, the logistics of the communication network in the northeastern part of the empire and have many traits in common with the Fortification material (Shaked 2004: esp. pp. 28–29; Briant 2009: pp. 148–151; cf. Chapter 66 Bactria).

Most travel rations represent basic nutrition levels, also in the case of free men (*šalup*); commodities other than flour and (less often) beer or wine are rare. Certain travelers received slightly or much higher rations (Seibert 2002); in some cases it is clear that the administration anticipated that an elite traveler would feed a private entourage from the commodities issued. A striking example of rare meat rations concerns 259 shipmen traveling from Persepolis to Media (NN 2261:4).

Armed teams (lance bearers) inspecting the roads are mentioned in the Fortification archive. Though they are sometimes described as, literally, “road counters,” their assignment clearly had to do with controlling rather than with measuring, as confirmed by equivalent designations (Tuplin 1997: pp. 406–409; Henkelman 2002: pp. 16–31, id. 2017: pp. 72–77). Once, road inspectors are said to approach the king at Susa, doubtless in preparation for his advance to Persepolis (PFa 22); on another occasion such officers inspected a certain stretch of the road and then waited for the king to arrive (PFa 30:8–10). Clearing the road of scorpions (Ael. *NA* 15.26; Ps.Arist. *Mirab.* 27 [832a]) and fallen trees (Ps.Arist. *Oec.* 2.2.14) may have taken place under the supervision of road inspectors as well.

Archeological Evidence

A stretch of the royal road could be traced over 43 km northwest of Naqš-e Rostam; it traces the edges of the Marv Dašt at a slightly elevated level in order to avoid inundation by the Kūr River. Rock-cut passages show that it was 5 m wide (Kleiss 1981; cf. Nicol 1970: p. 279; Sumner 1986: p. 17). An

excavated section at Bard Burīdeh also measured 5 m in width, was construed from 15 cm deep stone gravel sealed with reddish soil, and was lined with curbstones; it was associated with a 82 m long stone causeway cum wooden bridge structure (Nicol 1970: pp. 269–281; cf. Briant 2002: pp. 362–364 on bridges). Narrower rock-cut passages in the Tang-e Bolāgi are now understood as irrigation canals (Atai and Boucharlat 2009: pp. 23–31; Boucharlat 2011: pp. 566–570).

Two-way stations, at 26 km distance, have been identified between Naqš-e Rostam and Rāmgerd, near Garmābād and near Banī Yakeh (Kleiss 1981). A similar structure was excavated in the Tang-e Bolāgi (Asadi and Kaim 2009), and a fourth is known from Deh Bozān on the Khorāsān highway, c. 70 km northwest of Bīsotūn (Mousavi 1989; see also Boucharlat 2005: pp. 245–246; Yaghmace 2006). Surveys in the Deh Lorān (northern Khūzestān) and Mamasanī (western Fārs) plains have tentatively identified stops based on the intervening distances between sites (Neely and Wright 2010: p. 112; Askari Chaverdi et al. 2010: pp. 294–295). Some of the Achaemenid sites identified in the area between Šūštar and Rām Hormoz are also likely to be, or include, way stations (Moghaddam and Miri 2003: pp. 102–103, 2007: pp. 41–45). Further away, in the Surkhandarya valley of Achaemenid Bactria, a series of waystations may tentatively be identified (Wu 2018).

Other sites, generally referred to as “pavilions,” were probably not regular way stations but local administrative centers and representations of royal authority. At least some were located far from the main routes. Nevertheless, they could also host traveling groups, be it of a higher rank: the royal court, royal women, high administrators, etc. (Boucharlat 2005: pp. 272–274; Henkelman 2012: pp. 957–959 [with references]).

Means of Communication

Messages could be carried by various media. Most regular was the sealed written letter, presumably mostly in Aramaic (Hdt. 3.126–128). The installation of a new satrap, such as Cyrus at Sardes (Xen. *Hell.* 1.4.3), or a displacement, like that of Tissaphernes (Diod. 14.80.7–8; Polyæn. 7.16.1), was announced by letter. The transmission was typically the task of the fast messenger service, which used specially selected horses (Gabrielli 2006: pp. 45–62) that were changed at way stations. It was known as ἀγγαρίον in Greek (Hdt. 8.98, Xen. *Cyr.* 8.6.17–18); in the Fortification archive, the term *pirradaziš* (Old Persian **fratačiš*, “express runner, express service”; Tavernier 2007: p. 421) is widely attested, almost invariably in connection with the king. A recent calculation suggests that by means of the relay system, the distance from Sardes to Susa could be covered in about 12 days (Colburn 2013). There is evidence of a

relay system, but also, as a slower alternative, for the use of single messengers or emissaries (Jacobs 2003: pp. 254–256).

For less complex messages, other communication systems could be used (Wiesehöfer 1993: pp. 115, 350): fire beacons (Hdt. 9.3; Ps.Arist. *De Mundo* 298a; cf. Diod. 19.57.5) or transmission by guards posted within aural distance from each other (Hdt. 4.141; Diod. 19.17.6–7).

Communication and Connectivity

The imperial roads served the king as much as they integrated the empire; their security was crucial to the state and a precondition of any political action. Travelers were to be safe, taxes and tributes were not to be lost, military contingents had to be able to move swiftly and without hindrance. Thus, the existence and importance of the intricate network presupposes a high degree of political stability. The danger of highway robbery seems implied in *Ezra* (8:22, 31), but the same text refers to the possibility of military escorts and should not be taken as a sign of general insecurity. Traveling was considered safe and roads were protected by fortresses (Hdt. 1.52); the Fortification archive frequently speaks of travel guides (*barrišdama* = **paristāva*-; cf. Seibert 2002: pp. 35–39) accompanying groups of travelers, but not of larger armed escorts. Still, glitches in the system occurred from time to time: an opaque reference to “a previous travel authorisation lost on the road” (NN 1465) may serve as a case in point.

Probably still more important than the physical safety of travelers was the continuity of internal communication, for the high level of connectivity was a prime integrative factor of the empire. The relay system with fast messengers struck Herodotus as especially praiseworthy (8.98). Ancient authors already observed the relationship between regularity of communication and the central power’s ability to intervene in conquered territories (Briant 2002: p. 357). Moreover, communication speed within the Persian Empire was unusually high, higher than in, for example, the Roman Empire (Colburn 2013). As such, the network of roads, the empire’s circulatory system, was a factor of immense political consequence. The level of connectivity surely must be counted among the main reasons why the vast Achaemenid Empire remained stable for more than two centuries. An explicit imperial ideology underpinning this cohesion is not in evidence (Briant 2002: pp. 79–80) and may have been rooted primarily in more pragmatic levels of administration, notably in the intense communication between super- and subordinated offices within clearly-structured administrative hierarchies. These existed in a network of regional administrative systems stretching from Arad to Bactria, often betraying a repeating imperial signature with parallel structures and standard protocols supporting interregional travel and communication.

The Extent and the Borders of the Known World

As mentioned above, the duration of a voyage at regular speed could be calculated rather exactly. Way stations (σταθμοί) were located at one day's distance from each other; the absolute distance varied according to the terrain. Herodotus' description yields an assumed average distance of 24 km, archaeological data give distances between 16 km and 26 km. The number of way stations, in combination with length in parasangs, was used by both Herodotus and Xenophon to express distance or extent of a satrapy (Hdt. 5.52–53; 7.8.26; Xen. *Anab.* 2.2.6). Xenophon's account seems to have been informed by rather detailed information; although milestones (in some form) would appear a logical source, the existence of such indicators in the pre-Hellenistic era remains debated (Callieri and Bernard 1995; Tuplin 1997: pp. 404–417; Briant 1997: pp. 80–81; Rood 2010; Henkelman 2017: pp. 63–72).

An average daily distance was also at the basis of Herodotus' calculations of distances on water (4.86), notably those of the Pontic region, the Bosphorus, and Hellespont. Specific data were available for the Nile (Hdt. 2.7.9), giving an idea of the extent of Egypt. Strabo's specifications on the length of the Nile (17.1.2 [C 785/86]; cf. 1.24 [C 804]) and the Egyptian seaboard (17.1.14 [C 798/99]) are based on the same system of calculation, as is his description of Mesopotamia by distances between stations on the Euphrates (16.1.22 [C 746]; cf. 15.1.11–12 [C 689] on the Indus and the Ganges).

The expression of longer distances as a function of average daily travel in turn fed into a perception of surface areas of provinces or regions. In this, the form of an area was adjusted to a regular geometrical figure, the sides of which were determined by measurements won from coastlines, rivers, or roads dissecting the region (Strabo 2.1.23 [C 78–79]; cf. 2.1.11 [C 71]). The method is clearly illustrated in Strabo's specifications on the *Ariane*. Starting point for the west–east axis is the Caspian Gates. The road leading east from there forks in Areia, near the city of Alexandria. One branch of the road leads to Bactria, continuing over the Hindu Kush to Ortospana in Paropamisus; the other one runs via Prophthasia in Drangiana to the Indian border. Strabo states that taking the second branch into account yields a considerably higher expanse for Ariane (15.2.8 [C 723/24]; cf. 11.8.9 [C 514]).

From descriptions of the campaign of Alexander it becomes evident that the communication routes constructed and maintained by the Achaemenids at the same time defined the known world (cf. Strabo 2.1.6 [C 70]). In the Panğāb, opened up by roads and especially by navigable rivers, Alexander reached the eastern border of the province Sattagydia, marked by the Hyphasis, the eastern boundary of the empire. The space beyond it was uncharted and the object of fantastic reports already in the Persian period (Ctes. *Ind.*). Tales about mighty kings, enormous armies, giant rivers, endless deserts, und invincible

war elephants abounded (Curt. 9.2.2–12; Plut. *Alex.* 62.1–2; Diod. 17.93.2–3). To ward off such dangers, altars and oversize *klinae* were erected by the Macedonians, monuments marking the end of a connected, integrated world and holding back the mighty adversaries living in the disparate and terrible chaos of the Unknown (Jacobs 1994: pp. 270–272).

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CHAPTER 54

The Interplay of Languages and Communication

Jean-Jacques Glassner

Conceived as a mean of communication, language is the instrument of social life through which men inform themselves and influence each other, according to the structure of the group to which they belong. The Achaemenid Empire was a patchwork of peoples and languages. Twenty-three centuries later, the abbot Grégoire and the French Revolution invented the concept of a nation speaking one language only; with the imperative of a unique language in public acts, regional cultures were put away into marginality. When Rome was achieving its conquest, Italy was divided into small states with their own languages and writings. They were dominated by aristocratic elites in competition. With Latinization, those elites were attracted by the victor on the side of whom they hoped to carry their ambitions. At the end of the eighth century BCE, Sargon II of Assyria reminded one of his governors who had written to him in Aramean of the existence of an obligation imposing the use of Assyrian and cuneiform when writing to the king.

Compared with such proceedings, the Achaemenid Empire stands as an isolated figure. Multilingualism was the rule, even if the king and his entourage were content with Old Persian. As to the administration, all over the empire it made massive use of Aramean, as did the Assyrians and the Babylonians earlier. This unicity of administrative language, however, did not imply the disappearance of local languages, which had sometimes been those of great peoples and kingdoms. They continued to be used in private texts, the power deliberately favoring this linguistic disparity.

Mixing of Populations, Mixing of Languages

The Achaemenid Empire encouraged the circulation of men, services, and information. The result was a development of intercommunications between languages. The royal protocols, with the title “king of all the languages” (DSe, babylonian version), echoed this attitude.

Enterprising great works, the new masters continued the policy of transfers of populations started by the Assyrians and Babylonians. As is well known, since the Neobabylonian time, deported Judeans lived in Babylonia; the archives about them were written in Babylonian; as in the case of the Judean soldiers in Elephantine, one may infer that they had lost the use of their own language to the benefit of Aramean.

The provinces of the empire were also sprinkled with military establishments in which cohabitated contingents from various horizons. Two examples illustrate this. In Elephantine, in Egypt, a contingent of soldiers from various provinces was stationed whose commander came from Asia Minor (Grelot 1972). In Babylonia, not far from Nippur and Borsippa, some establishments were peopled with Carians from Egypt, with wives and children (Waezeggars 2006).

The mixing up of populations added to the complexity of linguistic situations. At Daskyleion, the court of the governor of Hellespontic Phrygia was opened to Greek influences, as attested by the wedding between the governor Artabazus and a Rhodian woman. One of the daughters of that same governor received a Greek education (Briant 1996: pp. 718–720). As for the Greeks settled into the empire, they were not all craftsmen, workers, or mercenaries, some were landowners, as in Babylonia.

Finally, an Iranian aristocracy in charge of high administrative functions was omnipresent in all the provinces. In Asia Minor, the traces of a Persian diaspora are to be found until the late Roman Empire, as testified, for example, by an epitaph in Greek language invoking “the gods of the Greek and the Persians” for the protection of a tomb. In Babylonia, the number of Iranians present in the land never ceased to increase. There, as elsewhere, marriage between members of local social elites and Persian administrators resulted in a certain acculturation of one or the other.

To sum up, the empire formed a patchwork of heterogeneous populations. These intermixings were not without consequences for the linguistic state of the provinces. As the sources stand, a global approach of the question is unconceivable, however. First of all, there is no archeological or even scientific evidence. Second, the pieces of information are spread unevenly throughout the empire.

Anthroponymy is, at this point, a source of primary importance. Only through anthroponymy can the presence of foreign populations in a given group be made visible. In Babylonia, as in Egypt, we note the adoption of

Iranian names by local populations, as well as the use of a double name, local and Iranian. The growing integration of Babylonia into the imperial administration is marked by an increasing number of Persian names. In Susa, the last governor, Abulites, had a Babylonian name, whereas his son was called Oxathres, a Persian name. The Carians of Borsippa, beside their one onomasticon, also had adopted Egyptian, Aramean, and Aramaized Babylonian names. In Asia Minor, mainly in Cappadocia, Armenia, Commagene, and Pontus, the numerous Iranian onomasticons testify to a deep Iranization. In Egypt, some documents from Elephantine show the names and patronyms of the scribes who wrote them: they are Persian, Judean, Syrian, Egyptian, or Babylonian. In the court of the governor Aršāma, some of the staff bore Egyptian or Cilician names; but it was always possible for an Iranian to bear a second Egyptian name or to give such names to his children. Thus, everywhere, the sources give evidence of the mixing of populations.

We must point out, though, about the misuse of the testimony of anthroponymy. Indeed, we know that there doesn't necessarily exist a simple and univocal relation between the onomasticon of a human group and its language. On the contrary, discrepancy is the rule; a plurality of groups can adopt one single anthroponymy or, conversely, a same group can adopt several different anthroponimies.

This mixing up also had consequences for the languages which were sometimes receptive to extraneous influences. For the classical authors, all the populations of the Iranian plateau used to speak Persian with slight dialectal variations. In fact, there were a more or less important number of Iranian languages, but only Old Persian and Avestic came to us directly (Fussman et al. 2005). The Old Persian of the Achaemenid sovereigns was not only a court language spoken by the kings, it was used, too, within the administration. Now, Old Persian is not without borrowing from other Iranian languages, notably Median; the word "king" itself, *xšāyathiya*, instead of the **xšāyašiya* expected, is a possible example. We may also find a Mesopotamian influence in the title "king of kings," *xšāyathiya xšāyathiyānām*, the genitive following the determining in the way of Assyrian inscriptions, instead of preceding it, as is expected in Iranian languages. Looking at it in another way, its phonetics being specific, one may question whether it was under Elamite influence. In the Persepolis tablets, some formulas are inspired by Aramean models.

Paradoxically, in the provinces, Old Persian did not appear except in royal inscriptions and some minor legends. Nevertheless, its discrete presence appears in words borrowed by local languages. The Persian Bagasarû, for example, holder of a charge of treasurer in Babylonia, was first conferred the Babylonian title *rab kāsir* before the Persian one of **ganzabara*.

Elamite was still a living language. Although most of the evidence comes from Persepolis and Susa, the discovery of tablets similar to those from Persepolis at Armavir-blur in Armenia should be noted. Elamite was then strongly Aryanized, as testified by the numerous borrowings from the Old Persian vocabulary and the adoption of attributive constructions which follow the old Persian formulas. It also lost its former nominal structure, its syntax undergoing some modifications. Everybody agrees today to see in the meeting between Elamite and Iranian populations a remarkable case of acculturation in the course of ethnogenesis (Henkelman 2008).

Babylonian, which was the third official language in the empire, after Old Persian and Elamite, was still a written language in Mesopotamia and Susa, but we don't know whether it was still spoken, even in Babylon. Its lexicon was enriched with Aramean and Iranian borrowings.

Aramean was spoken in Syria, Palestine, Babylonia, and probably in Cilicia; in Tarsis, the coin legends were written in Aramean; in the other provinces of Asia Minor, the legends alternated between this language, Greek, and local languages. In Samaria, they were generally in Aramean, but some of them were in Greek, Phoenician, sometimes in Assyrian and cuneiform. Elsewhere, Aramean was used only in the context of provincial administration. Strangely enough, it was not used in monumental royal inscriptions. It is noticeable that it remained the same in its principle from the Mediterranean sea to Bactriana, with traces everywhere of the influence of Iranian languages from which it borrowed quite a number of words. Nevertheless, some significant differences deserve to be underlined between western and eastern dialects (Folmer 1995).

As a matter of interest, Egyptian hieroglyphs were in use to note down the Achaemenid royal inscriptions in Egypt itself.

Greek was equally a provincial language, although Herodotus mentions that Darius I had two stelas engraved on the shores of the Bosphorus, one in Assyrian, the other in Greek. It is mainly documented in Asia Minor whose linguistic situation was one of remarkable complexity. Each province had its own language and sometimes its own writing. We find there a relatively important number of bilingual (lydo-aramean; graeco-lycian; graeco-aramean) or trilingual (graeco-lycian-aramean) documents. Ionien is present in two documents, one from Sardis, the other from Persepolis. Attic influence is strongly marked in Xanthos.

At this point of our inquiry, the existence of regular relations between communities speaking different languages brought about a creation of a few mixed languages, more or less impregnated by exogenous vocabularies and allowing direct communication without the need for translation. We think of the imperial Aramean and of the Achaemenid Elamite, to a less degree of Babylonian, the vocabularies of which were more or less contaminated by Old Persian or by other Iranian languages. But we can't ignore the fact that written

documentation noted down on leather and papyrus, except in Egypt, is lost. And we don't know the place of Old Persian as a spoken language.

The Art of Translation

Beyond the contact between languages, exchanges between men required the help of translation. Xenophon mentions the presence of numerous interpreters in the royal army. Obviously, with a few exceptions, neither the kings nor the Persian high dignitaries learned languages other than their own, which made the intervention of interpreters even more essential. We know of no one, except Themistocles, a refugee with the Great King, who ever learned Persian.

The documentation discovered at Persepolis provides a good image of the empire; it is multilingual and this is its distinctive mark. Two groups of texts prevail in numbers: those written in Elamite and those in Aramean. Both groups were found mixed up and the links fastening them together show that they were one single archive. There are also Elamite documents annotated in Aramean; more rarely, Aramean documents bear Aramean annotations. As a matter of interest, the scribes used to write in Elamite texts that were dictated in Persian. Two Aramean texts were written by non-Aramaic-speaking scribes, as established by their Elamite spelling. Finally, one text in Greek, another in Phrygian, a third in Old Persian testify to the existence, otherwise lost, of archives in these languages. Two Babylonian documents show the presence of a Babylonian population in Persepolis.

We may infer from those observations that the scribes in Persepolis mastered several languages. Quite a number of them had Iranian names, but some Babylonians possibly adopted Iranian names. Similarly, Aramean scribes may have adopted Iranian names, and perhaps even some Iranians could have learned Aramean.

The Elamite word *teppir* alluded to the function of scribe. In Achaemenid times it corresponded to the Akkadian *sepīru*, itself a borrowing from the Aramean *spr*, a title which referred to a bilingual or multilingual scribe.

Aramean was the only vehicle in the imperial administration outside Persepolis. However, due to its wide distribution it reduced the multilinguism in its width – it served as a mediator between the conquerors' language and the languages that were used locally. The unity of the empire was ensured by Iranian dignitaries in charge of the higher administrative posts in the provinces, while subsidiary posts fell to local administrators. The contact between these levels made interpreters particularly important.

We possess ample evidence of this in Asia Minor, Babylonia, Phoenicia, or Persepolis itself. Here are a few examples. The Egyptian compendium of case laws requested by Darius I was written in Demotic and Aramean (Briant

1996: pp. 972–973). In Babylonia, a slave's wrist had an Akkadian and an Aramean inscription. A Babylonian tablet mentions Iranian officials and their interpreters, *sepīru*, all bearing Babylonian names. When Persian peoples addressed Egyptians, they did so in Aramean, whether in administrative or private matters. However, three papyri were found that bear evidence of an exchange of mail in Demotic between the governor Pherendates and the people in charge of the Khnūm sanctuary in Elephantine (Hughes 1984). It has been convincingly demonstrated that the letters sent by the governor were translated from Aramean into Demotic by an Egyptian scribe. But the bad-quality Demotic version smells of translation as the scribe translated word for word. On the contrary, the answer was directly written in Demotic. As for the transmission of orders, the Aršāma archives allow us to discern three actors in concert: one transmitted the order, the second translated it into Demotic, the third noted it down, the Demotic translation proving that the addressee didn't know Aramean. As a matter of interest, we discover in some Egyptian sources a sort of transliteration of Persian titles into Demotic through Aramean; a scribe with an Iranian name could, occasionally, write in Demotic.

A group of documents in Aramean coming from Bactriana (Shaked 2004) comprises eight letters from Akhvamazdā, the governor of the province, to Bagavant, a city governor. Both sender and addressee were Persians. They therefore wrote in a language of which they were ignorant. Hence, they could not manage without the help of bilingual scribes used to simultaneous translation from Old Persian into Aramean. But their Aramean was of poor quality. Now, the scribes had Persian names and one, at least, originated from Bactriana. Two hypotheses present themselves: they must have learned written Aramean and epistolary style at school, or they were helped by second-rank Aramean-speaking scribes.

A stela discovered in Xanthos (Metzger et al. 1979; Blomqvist 1982; Kottsieper 2002), Lycia, presenting a trilingual inscription, in Lycian, Greek, and Aramaic, shows the undoubted vivacity of local languages in Achaemenid times. The text informs us about the modalities of a cult rendered to a Carian god, the "King of Kaunos," and his acolyte, Arkesimas. It is not a true trilingual, since, if the Lycian and Greek versions form a true bilingual, the Aramean one, with its numerous borrowings from Old Persian, differs totally.

The Lycian and Greek versions are identical, the second being a translation of the first one into an atticizing and elegant language, with one or two marks of doric; some particularities, however, are understandable only through Lycian influence. The two versions were meant for populations of local language and Greek culture. The Lycian *xssathrapaza*, "governor," is built on a word borrowed from the Persian *xssadrapa*. Unlike those two versions, the Aramean one shows many errors; besides, the lapicide knew Aramean, but imperfectly. The onomastic is Lycian, Carian, Greek, and Persian. When

dealing with the Carian names of the gods, the Lycian version transliterates that of “King of Kaunos,” the Greek one translates it, the Aramean transliterates consonant after consonant; as to the second name, the Lycian version adapts it, the Greek one gives a Hellenized transliteration, the Aramean offers the translation “the Companions.”

The quality of the translation could thus change according to the level of complexity of the language, but also according to the talent of the translator. As a general rule, the bi- or trilingual inscriptions weren’t as elegant as that of Xanthos. At Sardis, for example, Graeco-Aramaic or Lydo-Aramaic bilingual inscriptions testify to the difficulties met by the translators in passing from one language to another (Robert 1975).

In the courtly sphere, on the contrary, translation was not handicapped by the reproduction in the target language of syntactic structures specific to the original language. Such is the case of the Bisotun trilingual (Grillot-Susini et al. 1993; Schmitt 1991; Malbran-Labat 1994).

The commentators did not fail to see that for the sovereign it was the means to legitimate his power through the assertion of his 19 victories in a single year against nine rebel kings and his devotion to Ahuramazdā. For the text was a foundation charter of the Achaemenid monarchy, as were in Mesopotamia the accounts of the nine victories that Narām-Sîn of Akkade boasted to have enjoyed in a single year over three rebel kings, or later the story of the battle of Bouvines for the French Capetian monarchy. It could also be seen as an old Indo-Iranian ritual which submitted the monarch’s legitimacy to a one-year period. As a further element of external influence the abovementioned design of the titulature according to the Assyrian model can be valued. It is easy to understand the monarch’s wish to display his decisions to his subjects on the face of a cliff through monumental writing carried out with elegant affectation.

According to archeologists, the three versions of the inscription must have been engraved successively: the Elamite first, on the right of the bas relief, the Akkadian second, on its left-hand side, and finally the Old Persian underneath the bas relief. In between, the bas relief had been increased at the expense of the Elamite text, which was copied on the left of the Old Persian version. To the four columns of the Old Persian version itself a fifth has been added to complement more recent events.

There are arguments, flimsy no doubt, that lead us to doubt such reconstruction. Didn’t Darius call himself a speaker of Iranian? The similarities between the three versions imply that they must have been composed after a single model, which could only be the Old Persian version itself: Didn’t the king and his chancellery speak this language only? Of course, the three versions are not a mechanical copy of each other. The translators created a free and flexible paraphrase, respectful of the syntax and the turns specific to each language, attached not so much to the words as to the meanings.

If the presence in the Elamite version of Elamized Old Persian words is not surprising, such is not the case of Old Persian *pattikara* (§ 53) in apposition to an Elamite word, as if, in order to be more fully understood, it needed to be clarified by Persian. Similarly, the phrase *dayauišmi tarma ašdu* (Elamite version § 44; Old Persian version § 55) can be considered as the transliteration of an Old Persian sentence present in the original available to the author of the Elamite version, but there is no certainty there. One may as well understand the sentence as an Elamite phrase which words were borrowed from the Old Persian.

We are not yet in a position to fully measure the extent of the reciprocal influences between Achaemenid Elamite and Old Persian. However, a new perusal of the last paragraph of the Elamite version (Elamite version § 55; Old Persian version § 70) dismisses the idea of any translation from Elamite into Old Persian; we understand: “I have produced differently the text in aryan, which it was not before, on clay and leather.” This paragraph deals only with the question of the diffusion of the message. Thus the Elamite version is no more the first written version and the Old Persian version is no more a translation of it.

The Babylonian version often departs from the other two versions. We can discern conservatism. Certain toponyms and ethnonyms are designated by words with which they had been registered by Assyrian and Babylonian scribal traditions. The royal titlature also shows the impact of local habits, the Achaemenid ruler holding the Babylonian titlature in the same way as he holds the Egyptian one in Egypt. As for the rest, discarded by the other versions, the Babylonian one quantifies the number of dead and prisoners at the end of each paragraph; it sometimes adds a few extra bits of information, mainly about events concerning Babylonia. Such additional pieces of information lead us to think that the author had access to complementary sources.

Darius’ order was not ineffective: his inscription was copied and diffused all over the empire. A stela of which some fragments remain was dispatched in Babylon. The inscription in Babylonian language was associated with a relief which, apart from Gaumāta as Darius I’s opponent, showed only two Babylonian rebels and on which the king was not facing Ahuramazdā but the Babylonian celestial triad. In the text, the name of Ahuramazdā was replaced by that of Bēl, that is to say Marduk (Seidl 1999). The fragments of an Aramean translation were found on the Elephantine island (Greenfield and Porten 1982; Tavernier 2001). It represents strong affinities with the Babylonian version, even if this is not its direct source, comparison with the Bisotūn and Babylon versions showing a proximity to one or to the other in turns. Besides, it contains elements coming from the inscription on Darius’ tomb at Naqš-i Rostam.

Conclusion

Multilingualism and cosmopolitanism were the distinctive features of the Achaemenid Empire, its domination making use of this paradox that consisted in a superficial linguistic unification (such was the role of Aramean) and the maintenance of a diversity with the preserving of local languages. Was the result a society whose members could read and write two or several languages? First of all, it is most likely that if those languages were in use at the same time, they must have had complementary functions, the speakers using them in specific situations. We must distinguish between a true bilingualism or multilingualism, the use of languages with an identical cultural status, and the diglossy, the use of languages culturally hierarchized. In other words, a person is said to be bilingual or multilingual if they possess several languages as mother tongues; this situation is to be distinguished from that in which one language only is a mother tongue, the other(s) being learned at school. The interesting problem is then to know to which extent multilingualism influences the knowledge of each of the concerned languages. From that point of view, it is not without interest to note that in Persepolis all the Elamite-speaking scribes did not use Achaemenid Elamite, which had integrated quite a number of Old Persian or Iranian words, but wrote a language devoid of any borrowing, even in its syntax (Henkelman 2008).

The fundamental linguistic problem concerning multilingualism in Achaemenid times is to know to which extent languages in contact can remain intact and to which degree they can have influenced each other. Obviously, there were reciprocal influences between Elamite and Old Persian, for instance; there must also have been cases where the separation persisted.

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CHAPTER 55

Achaemenid Art – Art in the Achaemenid Empire

Bruno Jacobs

The following remarks focus on examples of large-scale representational art that can be connected directly with the Achaemenid dynasty and are therefore given the label “court art.” Their connection with the dynasty is established by inscriptions: these were normally commissioned by the ruling monarch (or on occasion by his designated successor) and were either placed directly on the artworks themselves or on the buildings that they decorated. To this core group one may add certain other items that are linked with it stylistically.

Achaemenid court art presents itself mainly in the form of architectural sculpture, particularly as a way of decorating stairway facades, the staircases themselves and the reveals of doors, gates, and windows. Interior and exterior walls could also be adorned by (at least) glazed brick panels and wall paintings (Glazed bricks: Daucé 2010: pp. 334–342.¹ Wall paintings: Boucharlat 2010: pp. 402–403; Fig. 466–469). In addition there are a number of rock reliefs, the famous torso from Susa (Yoyotte 2010; *here* Figure 94.8) and some other statue-fragments (Luschey 1983 with pl. 16–19), animal sculptures (Calmeyer 1995–1996), and a couple of stelae (Roaf 1974: pp. 79–84 Fig. a–d; Lloyd 2007: pp. 99–107 Fig. 2–3; *here* Figure 20.1). The thematic repertoire of the reliefs comprises representations of the king followed by servants, the ruler giving audience (Figure 55.1), delegations from imperial provinces



Figure 55.1 Persepolis, Apadana-Osttreppe, Delegation 2, Detail (DAI Abt. Teheran, W Neg. KB 63-28. Source: Reproduced by permission of the German Archaeological Institute).

(Figure 55.2), throne-bearers (who also represent these provinces) (Figure 55.3), a Royal Hero fighting wild beasts and hybrid creatures (Figure 55.4), soldiers (Figure 94.7), officials (Figures 55.5 and 94.6) and servants (Figure 55.6). On the facades of the royal rock-cut tombs we see a dais carried by provincial representatives, on which the ruler stands in front of an altar and renders homage to Auramazda (Figures 87.2 and 94.4; on the interpretation of this scene see Jacobs 2006: p. 219; cf. lastly Garrison 2011: pp. 40–65). Also deserving of special mention is the Bisotun relief: here Darius I, followed by two secondary figures, is shown as the victor over Gaumāta and those chieftains who, at the beginning of his reign, either tried to make themselves independent or sought to overthrow him (Luschey 1968; *here* Figure 55.7).

Except for the Bisotun relief, the monuments with which we are concerned are largely confined to the main residences of the Achaemenid empire (Susa and Babylon, Persepolis and Pasargadae: see Chapter 70 The Residences), and a couple of royal roadhouses in the heartland.² Only a few monuments once stood outside this central area, namely the statue of Darius and the Suez stelae in Egypt³ and two reliefs in Rough Cilicia (Davesne 1998) that are (because of the state of publication) difficult to assess. The best known of the Egyptian items, the statue of Darius found at Susa in 1972 (Figure 94.8), was in the end not left in the province, but “repatriated,” thus reducing the already small



Figure 55.2 Persepolis, Apadana-Osttreppe, Delegation 16-18 (D-DAI-EUR-TEH1964-0262. Source: Reproduced by permission of the German Archaeological Institute).

number of exceptions to the general rule. The way that Achaemenid art is largely confined to the central provinces Pārsa, Māda and Ūḡa and to Bābiruš prompts questions about the communicative function of the sculptures – and doubt about the propagandistic impact so often imputed to them. The term *propaganda* is inappropriate even in the Roman Republican or Imperial periods (Dally 2007: pp. 252–253, with further references in n. 109), and this is all the more true for earlier periods. For this reason the term “communication” will be used instead in what follows.

Top-down-communication is indispensable for the coherence of any state entity. That Achaemenid art, despite its geographical and thematic limitations, is widely regarded as a central medium for such communication is due to a (supposed) analogy with the central role of images as a communicative medium in Greek *poleis* and the Roman Empire as well as to the lack of sources documenting alternative modes of communication (see Chapter 53 Roads and Communication). In addition, the rich repertoire of pictorial art

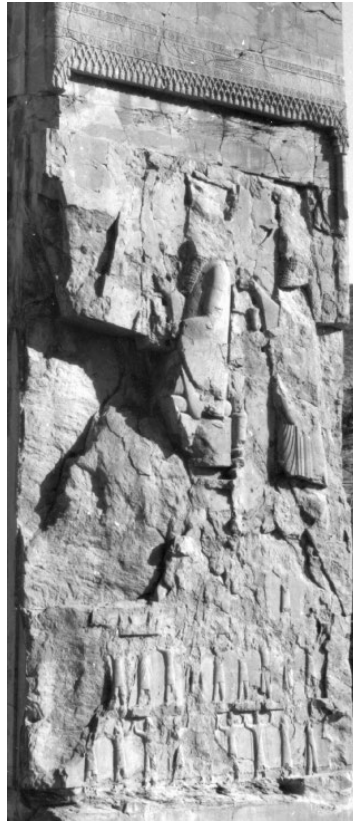


Figure 55.3 Persepolis, East gate of Tripylon, Ruler with throne bearers. Source: Photo B. Jacobs.

encountered at the western periphery of the Achaemenid empire, especially along the Aegean and east Mediterranean coasts, is often interpreted as proof that communication between the center of the empire and the remotest provinces was effected by these media. A central argument for this proposition is that topics are preferred in this area that hardly occur in the arts of mainland Greece, i.e. non-mythical hunts and fights, city-sieges, and courtly meals. The choice of these topics and certain provincial stylistic elements are attributed to Achaemenid impact, and on this basis an empire-wide communication via images has been “reconstructed” – the assumption often being made that the topics in question once existed in Achaemenid court art and simply happen not to occur in what survives to the present day (on this cf. Jacobs 2002: pp. 345–352).

Before we deal with the problem of the choice of subject matter, it must be stressed that in the Achaemenid period representational art was never an across-the-board phenomenon that reached all parts of the empire. In fact, it

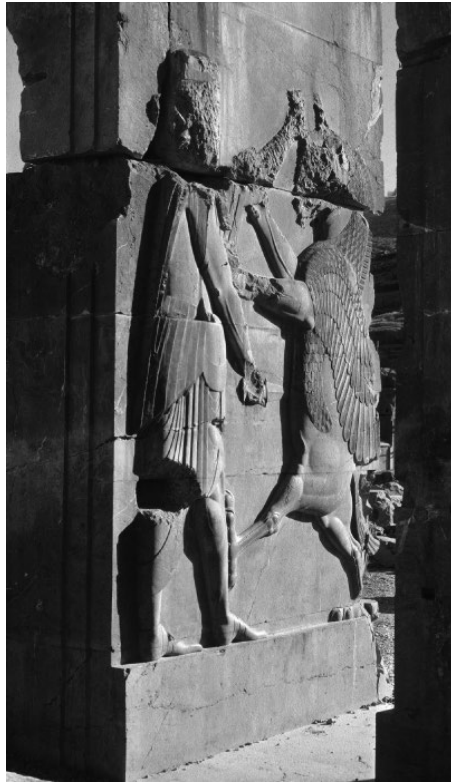


Figure 55.4 Persepolis, Hall of 100 Columns, Royal hero fighting a bull. Source: Photo B. Jacobs 96-4-28A.

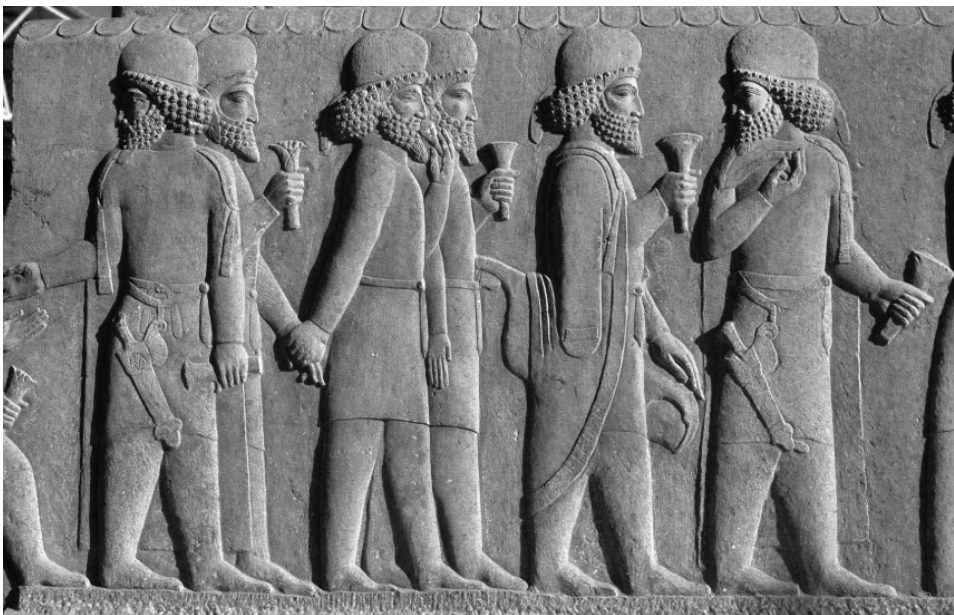


Figure 55.5 Persepolis, Tripylon, officials. Source: Photo B. Jacobs.

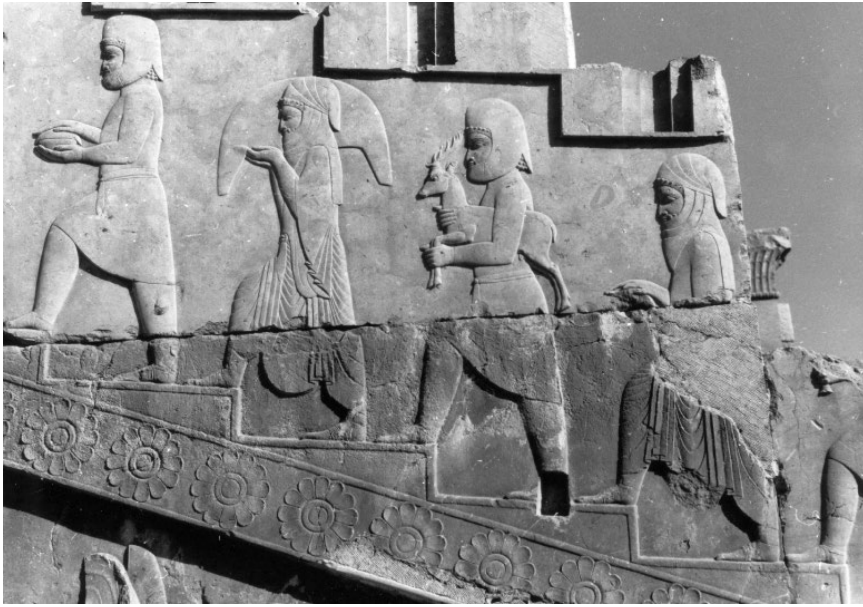


Figure 55.6 Persepolis, Palace of Darius, southern stairway, servants. Source: Photo B. Jacobs DSC_8645.



Figure 55.7 Bisotun, Relief of Darius I. Source: Photo J. Breitenfeld JBR5485.

was limited – at least according to the present state of knowledge – to the coastal areas of Asia Minor, Lydia and Phrygia, the Levant and Egypt, Babylonia and Elam, the Persian core area, and the province of Sistan.⁴ But these are all regions in which representational art had already existed in pre-Achaemenid times for centuries or even millennia. Nowhere was there a new

beginning in Achaemenid times. Provinces where representational art did not exist at the start of Achaemenid rule remained pictureless, and this is the situation in by far the greater part of the empire. There is, therefore, little sign that the Achaemenids deliberately set about disseminating representational art outside the imperial core area,⁵ and the salient monuments in Asia Minor cannot be regarded as exemplifying efforts to do any such thing (Jacobs 2002, 2014b, 2015b).

From the outset, therefore, we should regard Achaemenid court art and representational art in the provinces as mutually independent phenomena. If we begin with court art and focus attention on communication, questions arise immediately about the content and the intended audience of the messages it contains. Responses to these questions display a persistent tendency to take the Bisotun relief (Figure 55.7) as a starting point and to regard it as paradigmatic of the intentions of Achaemenid court art as a whole. But this involves ignoring the exceptional character of this monument – something that in other contexts is frequently stressed. It came into existence because the person who commissioned it was under huge pressure to establish his legitimacy, and Section 70 of the Old Persian text (and the corresponding passage in the Elamite version) famously indicates that its textual content was circulated across the empire: “Both on clay and on parchment it (*scil.* the text) has been placed ... Afterwards I have sent this text into the countries”. The existence of copies from Babylon (Seidl 1999) and Elephantine (Greenfield and Porten 1982), and the closeness of Herodotus’ narrative to Darius’ version of the same events, bear witness to this circulation.

This already suggests that the problems of Achaemenid pictorial art cannot be assessed independently of the inscriptions that are closely connected with it and, so far as dissemination is concerned, apparently followed the same impulses. Copies of heartland Achaemenid inscriptions have only rarely been found elsewhere within the empire.⁶ Once the greatest threat to Darius (the upheavals of his first regnal year) had been averted, inscriptions soon began to be divested of their circumstantiality. Initially historical events were still recapitulated in a summary manner, as in § 71–76 of the Bisotun inscription. Then there are a few instances in which such events are referred to in ways that barely give any idea of what actually happened (Jacobs 2014a). And finally they disappear altogether. Fact-rich inscriptions like DSf and DSaa are found only in the early years of Darius. In later texts, with the exception of genealogical data about the royal family, personal names are dispensed with, while toponyms also become rare and finally disappear: the last original list of provinces (XPh §3) occurs as early as the reign of Xerxes. In a similar fashion, pictorial art after Bisotun limits itself to the topics listed at the start of this chapter, and these are topics that are not well designed to convey complex messages.

For this reason people have looked for interpretations that work indirectly or on the basis of treating the monuments as an ensemble. The fact that in Achaemenid art – by contrast with the Assyrian reliefs with which it is frequently compared – representations of war and death are absent has been interpreted as an expression (or at least a vision) of harmonious co-existence, i.e. as the image of a *pax Persica* (Root 1979: pp. 309–311; Brosius 2005). The reliefs showing representatives of the imperial provinces carrying the king on a throne (Figures 55.3 and 94.4) have been understood as depictions of voluntary co-operation in the common interest (Calmeyer 1991: pp. 288–289). And the constant recurrence of the same topics has been taken to convey the message that Achaemenid rule was immovable and everlasting (Root 1979: p. 310).

That this last interpretation cannot be correct is easy to demonstrate. Not only is the effort entailed in conveying such a trite message by continuous repetition disproportionate, but the message would in any case have been impossible to understand as long as replications of the various topics did not (yet) exist. Only quite late in the fifth century would this deeper meaning have gradually come to light. This is a wholly implausible view.

As for the inclination to understand the monuments as a vision of imperial peace and voluntary co-operation, this is connected with the highly problematic supposition that the Achaemenids were bound by a higher moral code than their historical predecessors, the Assyrians and Babylonians. But one has to wonder if it really makes sense to keep on separating political vision from historical reality in this way. The ethical differences which are envisaged especially with respect to the Assyrians blur noticeably as soon as one (i) realizes that the picture of the Assyrian king as a merciless judge and wanton destroyer is also an ideological product and one that reflects reality in a similarly restricted manner, and (ii) pays attention to sources describing the considerable violence used by the Achaemenids to subdue opponents or deal with separatists and dissidents. Especially where punishment is concerned, the Achaemenids employed methods that were no less cruel than those of the Assyrians, and in the Bisotun text Darius was perfectly happy to give an account of such methods (Jacobs 2009: pp. 128–129, 151–152). So a different and more plausible explanation of the evidence seems to be required.

This explanation starts from the trio of legitimation strategies pursued by the Achaemenid rulers as described by G. Ahn, that is: divine and dynastic legitimation and legitimation by accomplishment (Ahn 1992: esp. pp. 89–91). At Bisotun Darius I used all three strategies, not least because his dynastic legitimacy was fragile and his rule insecure. It is plain, however, that the third of them soon lost ground in favor of legitimation by Auramazda. This meant that the ruler's achievements in his human environment gradually became unimportant and not worth either describing or depicting (Jacobs 2014a).⁷

Next, one has to realize that inscriptions and pictures were not addressed to the king's subjects. As has frequently been noticed, reliefs were usually installed in places that were not accessible to the common people, whether in the citadel of Persepolis (Figure 70.2), on the door-jambs of palaces in the middle of the royal paradeisos at Pasargadae (Figures 15.1, 55.8, 94.1, and 94.2), inside the palaces at Susa (Figure 15.5) or high above the ground on the rocks of Bisotun and Naqsh-e Rostam (Figure 87.2). The same is at least equally true of Achaemenid inscriptions. A large proportion of those known to us were foundation texts and, as such, were buried or enclosed in deposits, i.e. were inaccessible. Numerous inscriptions were installed high above the ground, whether on the towers of the so-called Apadana (see the reconstruction in Krefter 1971: Beil. 4.5.7.25.26; *here* Figure 55.9), on the *Gateway of All Lands* (Schmidt 1953: Pl. 9.14) or the southern wall of the Persepolis terrace (Tilia 1978: pl. 2 Fig. 9), and so were barely visible and certainly not legible (Jacobs 2012: pp. 96–97, Fig. 2–4). Precisely those inscriptions which, because of their complex content, could be regarded as of especially great communicative value, i.e. the inscriptions DB and DNb, explicitly name successors to the royal throne as their primary addressees and thus demonstrate that they only targeted a wider public in a very limited way. In the Bisotun inscription one reads:



Figure 55.8 Pasargadae, Palace P, relief on door jamb (DAI Abt. Teheran, Neg. R-1988-701 Source: Photo B. Grunewald; reproduced by permission of the German Archaeological Institute).

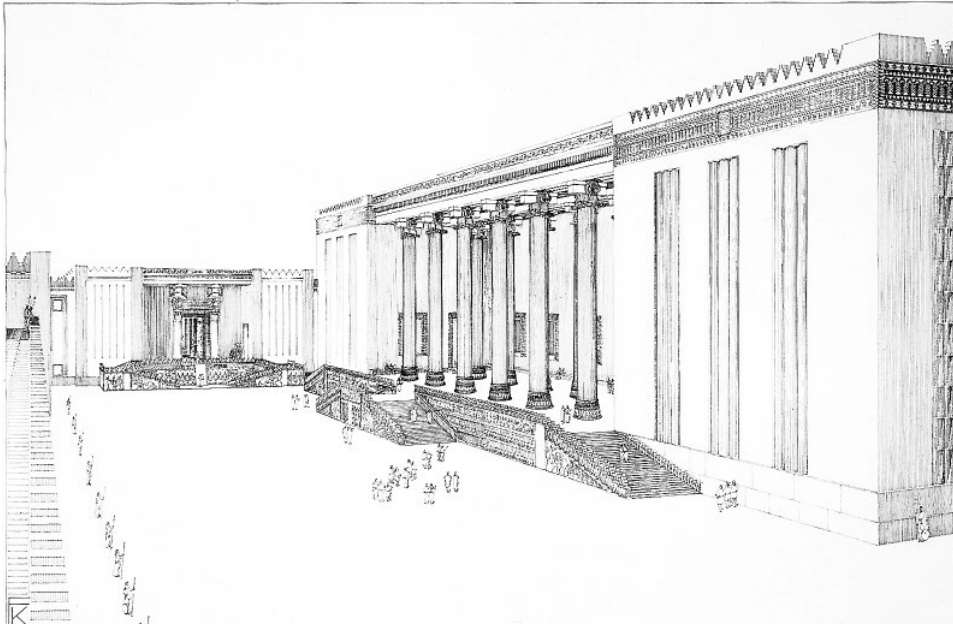


Figure 55.9 Persepolis, Reconstruction of Apadana and Tripylon (Krefter 1971, Beil. 26; Source: Reproduced by permission of German Archaeological Institute).

(§64) *Proclaims Darius, the king: You, whosoever shall be king hereafter – the man who shall be a follower of Falsehood, or (the man) who shall be an evil-doer, to those may you not be friendly, (but) punish them severely.* (§65) *Proclaims Darius, the king: You, whosoever hereafter shall look at this inscription, which I have written down, or these sculptures, do not destroy (them); as long as you shall be vigorous, thus care for them!* (transl. Schmitt 1991, p. 71)

In addressing the “young man” the inscription DNb also speaks to an heir apparent:

(§3a) *O young man, very much make known of what kind you are, of what kind (are) your skills, of what kind (is) your conduct! ...* (§3b) *O young man, let not that seem good to you, which the ... does; what the weak does – observe that too! O young man, do not set yourself against the ...* (transl. Schmitt 2000, p. 41)

It has already been noted that, where dissemination is concerned, the images of Achaemenid court art followed the same impulses as inscriptions. It follows that they were also directed at successors to the throne more than at a wider public. Consequently there is no good reason to think that what we see in pictorial art was intended to override or deny reality. The images are not peaceable, but undramatic, and they edit out testing situations like war

or hunting because legitimation of the rulers by these activities was not their objective. Instead their real theme is represented by those essential pillars of the exercise of power, the soldiers and the elite officials. The empire itself is present in the shape of the delegations and throne-bearers who stand for imperial provinces. The relationship with the world of the gods is represented by the repeated face-to-face meeting of god and ruler and their general iconographic assimilation one with another (Jacobs 2017; *here* Figures 55.7 and 94.4). It is a relationship that is best reflected by a phrase in the inscription DSk §2: “Auramazda (is) mine, I am Auramazda’s.” The god impacts on the world through the king and, to judge by the inscriptions, had already become the real maker of political decisions quite early in Darius’ reign: for he decided conflicts (DNa §4; DSe §5) and settled the succession to the throne (XPf §4) (Jacobs 2014a).

The corpus of representational art in the provinces offers an entirely different picture. In contrast to the Persian heartland pictorial art here is found mainly in sepulchral contexts. In the iconography of the central topics (hunting, combat, city-siege, and banquet) there is always a protagonist who can confidently be identified as the deceased. Hence legitimation by achievement was definitely intended, even if in an idealized form. So, simply in terms of ideological intention, these images are certainly independent of Achaemenid prototypes, because the latter would have been unsuited to their purpose.

Nevertheless, the predilection for the topics of war, hunt, and banquet observable in all the relevant western provinces (Hellespontine Phrygia, Paphlagonia, Lydia, Lycia, Caria, Greater Phrygia, Cilicia, and Phoenicia) does call for an explanation. Among war-scenes it has been suggested that the visually striking theme of city-siege (particularly popular in Lycia) derived from Assyrian models (Childs 1978). But quite apart from the fact that the putative prototypes would hardly have been accessible, the typological development of Lycian art makes iconographic dependence of this sort impossible (Jacobs 1987: pp. 61–64). What Assyrians and Lycians did share with one another was the perception that, for a member of the social elite, hunting, battle, and banqueting were of central significance, the first two as moments to prove oneself and the third as a way of demonstrating one’s social position (Figure 43.3). This view was also shared by the Achaemenids, and indeed probably by the whole imperial elite, but only small parts of that elite demonstrated it by having the relevant subjects converted into pictorial art, especially in the furnishing of their grave monuments. At the western periphery of the empire the process involved local adaptation of Greek artistic forms, with the consequence that the monuments can be classified and dated by stylistic criteria developed from Greek art. The close contact between various regions that resulted from common affiliation to the Achaemenid empire led to an intensive exchange of ideas, and the eventual result was that similar pictorial themes

appeared all over the place. What this shows is consensus among elites, not the propagandistic impact of the Achaemenid court (Jacobs 2014b).

The thematic convergence of monuments from Asia Minor and Phoenicia that resulted from this consensus can be illustrated very clearly in a series of processions which have in common the presence of a vehicle whose superstructure is difficult to understand and whose function is debated. Sometimes the superstructure looks like a wooden framework covered with fabric, sometimes like a chest with a rounded top. Some scholars are of the view that the object is a sarcophagus, others think that we are dealing with a canopy under which we are to imagine a woman or someone or something else that had to be sheltered from public view. But, whatever the function of these vehicles, the processions as a whole resemble one another so closely that they cannot have come into existence independently. (An overview of the images appears in Summerer 2007b: pp. 138–141 fig. 6, and a summary of proposed interpretations in Summerer 2007b: pp. 139–141).

The claim that battle, hunt, and banquet scenes in the western provinces were created independently of putative prototypes in Achaemenid art cannot be rejected just because some elements are doubtless dependent on Achaemenid models. The relationship of audience scenes to Persepolitan prototypes is open to discussion in certain cases, e.g. the reception scene on the eastern front of the Harpy Tomb at Xanthos (London, Brit. Mus., BM 287: Gabelmann 1984: no. 15 pl. 5,2; Jacobs 1987: pl. 6,2), the audience scene in the second frieze of the Nereid Monument at Xanthos (London, Brit. Mus., BM 879: Gabelmann 1984: no. 16a pl. 6,1; Jacobs 1987: pl. 6,3) or the eponymous scene on the Satrap Sarcophagus from Sidon (Istanbul, Arkeoloji Müzeleri: Gabelmann 1984: no. 22 pl. 9). In these instances the representation of an enthroned potentate, accompanied by two figures standing behind his throne, may be more or less heavily dependent on reliefs at Persepolis (Schmidt 1953: pl. 96–99, 119, 121–123; Gabelmann 1984: pl. 1; Jacobs 1987: pl. 6,1), but the similar appearance of the scenes in question could also be the product of a similarity of ceremonial. On the other hand, the audience scene on the Payawa Sarcophagus (London, Brit. Mus., BM 950, 7, and Antalya, Arch. Mus: Gabelmann 1984: no. 21 pl. 8; Jacobs 1987: pl. 7) is an indisputable case, because both here and at Persepolis the scene includes a figure who introduces others to the potentate (Jacobs 1987: p. 47). Even more indisputable is the well-known painting on the inner side of a shield carried by a soldier on side C of the Alexander Sarcophagus (Istanbul, Arkeoloji Müzeleri: von Graeve 1970: pp. 102–107 Pl. 34,1; 69; 70; 71,3). In both instances acquaintance with prototypes from Persepolis, whether the Treasury Reliefs or the audience scenes on the southern doors of the Hundred Column Hall, is beyond argument. The same may be true of the gift-bearers on the third frieze of the Nereid Monument (London, Brit. Mus., BM 895: Shahbazi

1975: p. 92 pl. LXIV; Jacobs 1987: p. 48 Taf. 8,1–2; Childs and Demargne 1989: pl. 124, 3; 125, 1. 3; LII; cf. Persepolis, Apadana stairway facades, delegation 9: Schmidt 1953: pl. 35). But borrowings of this kind are not the result of an initiative from the imperial center. On the contrary the urge to adapt generally comes from provincial elites themselves (Sommer 2005: pp. 145–146),⁸ and we are entitled to suppose that allusions such as the audience and gift-bearer scenes mentioned above or direct quotations like the image on the inside of a shield on the Alexander Sarcophagus reflect the initiative of local tomb-owners and were intended to express their loyalty to and approval of current political circumstances.

Members of the Iranian elite did come into contact (e.g. in Asia Minor) with this imagery, completely divergent as it was from that of the imperial centers in terms of ideology and audience. Yet it is hardly ever demonstrable that they exploited the possibilities that it offered: this may be because it really *was* rare for them to do so or (on the contrary) because they accepted those possibilities without reservation or adjustment, with the result that their monuments were barely, if at all, distinguishable from those of natives (Jacobs 2015a). The first alternative is perhaps favored by the monuments (mostly stelae) found in the vicinity of the satrapal residence at Dascylium which – despite over-hasty views to the contrary – can hardly ever be linked to Iranian members of the satrapal court (Lemaire 2001; Jacobs 2007: p. 24; 2015a). The second alternative can claim support from the Karaburun II tomb in the Milyas (Figure 43.3): here the grave owner is depicted at a banquet, dressed in what appears to be the court robe, a form of clothing well-known from Achaemenid court art (Figures 94.6–94.8), as well as from seals (Figures 21.6 and 56.1b) and coins (Figures 57.2–57.6), and one that is never worn by anyone who is certainly not a Persian, at least in a wider sense of that term. (On the definition of “Persian” cf. Henkelman 2011: pp. 582–614.) If Karaburun II is not to be declared as an exception, the tomb-owner should be identified as a Persian (Jacobs 1987: pp. 29–32), and the same will apply to the owner of the tomb at Tatarlı, who (if we are right to identify him as the protagonist in the battle scene) is depicted in the same robe (Jacobs 2014b; for illustrations see Summerer 2007a: Fig. I–III; on the robe see Chapter 74 Clothes and Insignia).

In both of these grave-monuments the pictorial decoration was on the inside, so one still cannot simply assume that it had a widespread impact. The same is true of sarcophagi arrayed in subterranean burial places as at Sidon or of reliefs installed high above the ground or overshadowed by the ceiling of a peristasis as on the Nereid Monument of Xanthos. In these cases communication with the gods, enhancement of the value of the monument and/or the performative character of the imagery may have been regarded as more important than communication with human spectators. Whether in the provinces or

in Achaemenid court art, one probably does most justice to monuments if one differentiates between those who could see the pictures and those who were supposed to see them (cf. Russell 1991: pp. 223–240, esp. p. 240). Nonetheless, to the extent that their decoration was placed on the outside and at a modest height, some provincial monuments did address a much wider “public” than the monuments of Achaemenid court art which, in the end, only members of the “inner court” had a chance of contemplating.

If we accept that the target audience was limited in this way, what are the consequences for our interpretation of the subject-matter of Achaemenid court art? On the one hand one should no longer start from the premise that complex messages and complete programs of government can be extracted from the images. Their purpose was to show the king in his central functions, as ruler over the empire (reflected by the provincial delegations), supreme military leader and the first among the nobility. The ritual scene on the rock tombs (Figure 94.4) makes visible the king’s personal relationship with Auramazda. The other images – the king fighting wild beasts and hybrid creatures (Figure 55.4) and the lion-bull-combat scenes (Figure 94.5) – continue to present difficulties, but are nowadays commonly understood as mythologizing celebrations (albeit entirely subjective ones) of the king’s struggle for the security of the empire, the maintenance of order and the victory of good over the bad.

Summary

These lapidary declarations constitute a definition of the Achaemenid concept of power. By re-using the topics formulated by Darius on later buildings his successors documented their adoption of this definition. The most complex topic of Achaemenid reliefs and paintings, the delegations and throne-bearers that depict the king’s relationship with his subjects, may serve as an example. Darius formulated this topic on the Apadana and the Tripylon at Persepolis and on his tomb at Naqsh-e Rostam, and his successors repeated it on the Hundred Column Hall, the staircase later relocated to Palace H, the wall-paintings found in the Palace at the Chaour and the western staircase of the Palace of Darius at Persepolis (cf. Jacobs 2002: p. 361). On each occasion these repetitions were quasi-commitments by the relevant king to the conception of monarchy created by Darius, to a personal obligation toward the god of the royal house and to familial continuity. The target-audience for this message, the group of people who would actually see the pictures, was small. Meanwhile the top-down communication that made exercise of power possible and kept the empire together occurred elsewhere and in other media (see Chapter 53 Roads and Communication, Chapter 54 The Interplay of Languages and Communication, Chapter 56 Seals and Sealing, Chapter 58 Empire, Borders and Ideology).

NOTES

- 1 Their original location can mostly be determined only approximately or not at all.
- 2 Fragments of reliefs from Hakavan in the district of Farmeshgan (Razmjou 2005: fig. 6–10) or from Bardak-i Sīāh in the province of Bushehr (Arfaee 2008: p. 74 n. 100) may have belonged to this kind of accommodation.
- 3 The sculptor Hinzani from whom the Egyptian satrap Aršāma ordered representations of a horseman, a chariot(?), and other subjects (Kuhrt 2007: p. 819 no. 64) may have been a seal-cutter (cf. the discussion in Tuplin 2013: pp. 100–107). If we have to think of large-scale representations, we should exclude that they were executed in the Achaemenid court style as the subject matter lacks parallel in monumental versions of that style.
- 4 Sistan has been included here because of the wall paintings from building no. 15 at Dahan-e Gholāmān (Sajjadi 2007: pp. 146–154 fig. 21–31) – hard to date though they are.
- 5 On the exceptional position of Egypt in this context and on its position as an ideological center of gravity see Jacobs (2012: pp. 108–111).
- 6 A section of DNb is attested in Aramaic on a papyrus from Elephantine (Sims-Williams 1981), while a clay tablet which exactly reproduces the text of DPa was found near Gherla in Romania (Harmatta 1954: pp. 7–10).
- 7 For a similar shift in the late Akkadian period see Sallaberger (2002).
- 8 Sommer (2005: p. 146): “Normally it is the elites of subject peripheries themselves who strive for assimilation, in order to exchange the loser’s camp for that of the victor. The initiative for assimilation thus comes from below, almost never from above, because, at least in cultural matters, empires practice an extraordinary degree of ‘structural tolerance’ (Jürgen Osterhammel).”

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author is very grateful to Christopher Tuplin for his assistance with the English version of this chapter.

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CHAPTER 56

Seals and Sealing

Mark B. Garrison

Introduction

One of the most ubiquitous and long-lived artifacts from ancient western Asia was the engraved seal. The artifact took two primary forms, the cylinder seal and the stamp seal. On both types imagery is carved in the negative on the seal matrix; when rolled or impressed into a malleable medium, the carved relief then appears in the positive. Stone was the most common material for seals, but bone, metal, ivory, shell, and other materials could also be used. A typological variant of the stamp seal is the metal signet ring wherein the imagery is carved or cast into the ring face. Metal rings first appear relatively late, c. 600 BCE, but were then used with both the cylinder and the stamp seal throughout the Achaemenid period. Previous to the Achaemenid period, stone stamp seals could be set within bezels on metal rings, but the evidence for such is quite rare. Within the Achaemenid period, metal signet rings and stone stamp seals set within rings became very popular and, indeed, outlasted both the cylinder and the stamp seal, becoming the most common seal type in the Hellenistic and Roman periods.

Sealing is a confusing term. It can refer to the act of impressing a seal into a malleable medium, in ancient western Asia generally clay, or to the end product of that action, a raised relief on a clay document. In many publications the term sealing is used only for sealed documents that carry no text, but this convention is by no means universal.

Seals performed myriad functions in ancient western Asia. We can broadly divide these functions into two categories: the “administrative” and the “imaginary.” Both categories on various levels express aspects of identity and/or “personhood.”

In the “administrative” mode, seals operated exclusively in their impressed state. The most common surviving medium on which seals are impressed is the clay tablet that carries a text inscribed in cuneiform (used to write a variety of languages; Aramaic written in ink or inscribed on clay documents also occurs in the first millennium BCE). Clay tablets carrying cuneiform texts generally are rectilinear in shape, but many irregular shapes also occur. The second most common surviving format is a lump of clay that is used to secure doors and objects (e.g. boxes, sacks, jars, letters). This type of document, sometimes called a “sealing,” generally is uninscribed, but in some cases may carry short inscriptions in cuneiform. Often the lumps of clay are placed over knots of rope or string securing the object. This type of document assumes a variety of forms depending on the nature of the object to which it is attached (Herbordt (1992: pp. 33–70) concerning sealing practices in the Neo-Assyrian period). Lumps or rings of clay placed over strings securing letters are often called *bullae*; the term is, however, also applied to sealed clay documents securing other types of objects (Kaptan 2002: pp. 13–14). In all these examples of the “administrative” mode of seal use, the seal impression serves primarily to identify an individual or an institutional authority. In this sense the seal impression functions as something akin to the modern written signature in that it affirms, or verifies, the presence of individuals or offices as witness to transactions and/or indicates ownership, authenticity, administrative oversight, etc. The seal impression in its “administrative mode” may then be seen as some type of magical extension of the *persona* of the seal owner/user.¹

In the “imaginary” mode, seals could operate in their artifactual state (the actual seal matrix) and/or in their impressed state. The “imaginary” mode refers to the significance potentially ascribed to the artifact and/or the imagery carved upon it. As artifacts, seals could carry a variety of meanings; e.g. some types of material from which seals were carved were thought to have magical properties (Collon 1987: pp. 113–119). Certain types of precious materials, particularly gold and lapis lazuli, could also clearly signify aspects of social status. For this reason, seals were often worn conspicuously on the body (Collon 1987: pp. 108–112). The carved imagery and stylistic qualities of that carving, viewed primarily in the impressed state, could also convey a wide range of social significance. Understanding that significance is much more difficult of an endeavor given the almost complete silence in our sources to these types of issues.²

Glyptic imagery is a primary source for determining traditional art historical concerns such as period styles, themes, iconography, and composition. These

types of analyses seek to understand glyptic imagery within the broader visual landscape so as to construct a narrative sequence of changing patterns of visual representation through time and space. Thematic content is a particularly important area of research where one may also develop ideas concerning overarching cultural ideologies for a particular time and place and/or changes in cultural ideologies through time.

Another aspect of the “imaginary” mode of seals is the relationship of glyptic imagery to the seal user/owner. Given the variety of the surviving imagery and the oftentimes virtuosic carving techniques, one assumes that in some contexts visual imagery must have meant something to the seal owner/user beyond the purely functional (i.e. the need to impress an identifying mark on a document).

Seals and sealing thus are primary vehicles of communication, expressing a variety of messages in both “administrative” and “imaginary” modes. These two modes of communication are not, of course, exclusive to each other but, on the contrary, could function in tandem within multiple and complex signifying systems. The discussion that follows will concentrate on the “administrative” mode of communication; for the “imaginary” mode, see Chapter 95 The Minor Arts.

The Evidence

Seals and sealing were two critical mechanisms that allowed the Achaemenid imperial state to function and prosper. Seals and/or sealed documents survive from almost every region encompassed by the empire.

There are hundreds of seals that have been published under the general rubric of Achaemenid glyptic. Most of these seals are in fact court-centric iconography rendered in various local styles of carving. Perhaps the most oft-discussed and illustrated seals representing this type of phenomenon are the so-called Greco-Persian class of seals (see Chapter 95 The Minor Arts). The great majority of these Greco-Persian seals, as well as other examples of actual seals exhibiting court-centric iconography rendered in various local styles, are unprovenanced; thus, there is little that can be said concerning either their “administrative” or “imaginary” modes of communication.

Fortunately, from across the empire there survive large numbers of sealed documents coming from various types of contexts (Pedersén 1998: pp. 213–234; Garrison and Root 2001: pp. 32–39). Some of these contexts are clearly archival; indeed, the Achaemenid Persian period is exceptional in the number and quality of seals that survive as impressions within the context of archives. The full extent and significance of this material is only slowly coming into focus.

Given the wealth of surviving documentation, the discussion that follows is selective, seeking to highlight some of the assemblages of sealed documents and some aspects of the “administrative” mode of communication that they reveal.

Persepolis

By far and away the most important corpora of sealed administrative documents come from three archives at Persepolis: the Persepolis Fortification archive; the Persepolis Treasury archive; a hoard of administrative bullae and clay tags found in the “Mountain Fortification” on the Šāhi Kūh east of the Persepolis terrace (see also Chapter 6 The Inscriptions of the Achaemenids and Chapter 62 Persia).

The Fortification archive was excavated in two chambers of the northern fortification wall at Persepolis (hence its name). The archive concerns a state agency that managed, in a region centered on Persepolis, the collection, storage, taxation, and disbursement of locally-produced commodities (cereals, wine, beer, oil, honey, fruit, poultry, livestock) that were subsequently distributed as subsistence rations or “salary” to members of the royal family, the imperial elite, administrative officials, religious officials (and deities), travelers on the royal roads, agricultural workers, craftsmen, and livestock.³ The archive is dated by date formulae in the Elamite and Aramaic documents to the middle years of the reign of Darius I, 509–493 BCE (Henkelman 2008a: pp. 173–177).

The territory administered by the Fortification archive lay predominantly in what is today the province of Fārs. The exact extent of the administrative purview of the system is unclear; modern Behbahān may mark the westernmost extent of the system, Nīrīz the easternmost, in which case we are dealing only with the highlands of pre-Achaemenid Elam, not the lowland floodplains of the Susiana (Henkelman 2008a, pp. 110–117).⁴ Prominent features in the administrative landscape of the Fortification archive were segments of the famous royal road; some 20 post-stations appear to fall under the agency’s operational jurisdiction (Koch 1986, 1990; Vallat 1993; Graf 1994; Giovinnazzo 1994; Briant 2002: pp. 357–359, 365–368, 927; Arfa’i 1999; Potts 2008; Henkelman 2008a: pp. 113–115, 2008b; Garrison and Henkelman 2020a).

The Fortification archive is very large, perhaps as many as 20 000–25 000 surviving tablets and fragments (Jones and Stolper 2008: pp. 37–44; Henkelman 2008a: pp. 75–79; Garrison 2017: pp. 27–49; Azzoni et al. 2017).

There are three categories of clay documents in the archive: tablets carrying texts written in cuneiform script in the Elamite language (the most common type of document in the archive), generally sealed; tablets carrying texts

written in Aramaic script and language, almost always sealed; uninscribed, but sealed tablets.⁵

Among this documentation there are preserved some 4059 distinct seals, making the archive one of the largest corpora of visual imagery coming from a single discreet context (Garrison 2017: pp. 49–71, 77–103). These seals belong to or are used by a wide range of individuals, some entrenched as administrators within the system, others passing through on state business. The ability to link in many cases images to specific individuals and offices represents a rare opportunity to pursue myriad issues surrounding social aspects of visual imagery; at, no less, an imperial capital during the most critical formative period of the Achaemenid imperial phenomenon! The seals on the Fortification archive exist within a complex network of social and administrative relations between hundreds of individuals mentioned by name, office, and/or title. As a resource for the history of early Achaemenid art, the glyptic from the Fortification archive is unique. The importance of this corpus of visual imagery, both as regards “administrative” and “imaginary” modes of communication, cannot be overstressed.

Tablet shape is an important criterion of administrative legibility within the Fortification archive. This is especially the case with the Elamite documents, which have a highly developed typology (Henkelman 2008a: pp. 102–109; Garrison 2008). The Aramaic and the uninscribed documents share a distinctive small, triangular-shaped tablet format, suggesting that these two document types are closely related (Garrison 2008).

Sealing protocols are readily understandable and shared among all three document types (Garrison 2008, 2017: pp. 52–67; Henkelman 2008a: pp. 129–134). The vast bulk of the documents in the archive carry either one seal (single-seal protocol) or two seals (Figure 56.1). In several cases, there is a clear correspondence between tablet shape, sealing protocol, and text content. Of those documents that carry two seals, in many cases it is clear that a counter-seal protocol is followed: the seal on the left edge representing a commodity supply office, that on the reverse representing the receiver (or agent for the named receiver) of the commodity.

The Persepolis Treasury archive is a much smaller affair, consisting of 138 Elamite documents, one Akkadian text, and 199 uninscribed, but sealed, clay “labels” (Cameron 1948, 1958, 1965; Schmidt 1957: pp. 4–41, pls. 2–14; Jones and Yie 2011). The archive, found in a series of rooms in the northern part of the Treasury building at Persepolis, concerns payments of silver from the Treasury at Persepolis made in lieu of partial or full rations of sheep, wine, or grain to workers and craftsmen active at or near Persepolis. While the payment of silver is undocumented in the Fortification archive, there are numerous points of contact between the two archives, including administrative terminology and a handful of personnel and seals (Garrison 2017:



Figure 56.1 Persepolis Fortification archive, Left edge (PFS 66a*) and reverse (PFS 7*) of PF 702, example of tablet carrying the impressions of two seals. Source: Reproduced by permission of M.B. Garrison.

pp. 71–77). Henkelman (see Chapter 62 Persia) suggests that the Treasury archive “represents a branch of administration parallel, or perhaps subordinated, to that documented by” the Fortification archive. The named individuals that we meet in the Treasury archive are, however, many fewer in number

and of much more restricted administrative profiles than those in the Fortification archive. The published Elamite texts from the Treasury archive date to the period 492–457 BCE.

Seal usage in the Treasury archive is rather more limited than in the Fortification archive. The letter-orders from the Treasury archive are sealed by the issuers of the orders (as in the Fortification archive); there are 11 cylinder seals in total that occur on the letter-orders. Each memorandum from the Treasury archive also carries only one seal; only seven cylinder seals are involved. There is some debate as to whom the seals that occur on the memoranda belong.

The uninscribed “labels” from the Treasury are of varying sizes and shapes; no proper typology of the “labels” has ever been done (Schmidt 1957: p. 6; Garrison and Root 2001: p. 33). A few of the “labels” are similar to the uninscribed documents from the Fortification archive. Other “labels” were lumps of clay that had been affixed to cords, cords bundling objects (in some cases perhaps folded papyrus or parchment documents), or to the objects directly. One assumes that the “labels” were affixed to objects, presumably of some value, that were kept in the Treasury (cf. however, the comments of Razmjou 2008: pp. 55–57). Two seals, PTS 5* and PTS 8*, occur on both the “labels” and the Elamite documents; one thus assumes that the two document types were parts of the same administrative agency. There are many more seals – 61 – that occur on the “labels” than on the Elamite documents, and those seals include cylinders, stamps, and signet rings. As few as one and as many as seven different seals may occur on a “label” (Schmidt 1957: pp. 5–6). Lastly, all commentators since Schmidt (1957: pp. 14–15) have noted the high percentage of Greek and Greek-inspired imagery on the stamps and signet rings that occur on the “labels” from the Treasury archive. Schmidt (1957: pp. 15–16) suggested that these seals, or most of them, were owned by Greeks working for Persians. In fact, we have few clues as to when and where these “labels” were made. Schmidt inferred that the presence of PTS 5* and PTS 8* on the “labels” surely indicated that most if not all of the “labels” were generated at Persepolis. While this may be so with regard to those “labels” associated with those two seals, we cannot be as certain about the others. We have no direct information as to how and why objects came to be stored in the Treasury (Cahill 1985; Garrison and Ritner 2010: pp. 40–41).

In their “administrative” mode, the 18 cylinder seals from the Treasury archive (and the Elamite documents on which they occur) are directly linked to seals and Elamite documents that occur in the Fortification archive. The seals that occur on uninscribed “labels” and the “labels” themselves appear, however, to present a rather different dossier, one that merits a fuller analysis than heretofore undertaken.

The third Persepolitan archive comes from one of the towers in the fortification wall on the mountain Šāhi Kūh that overlooks the Takht (Tajvidi 1970,

1973, 1976: pp. 195–196; Garrison and Root 2001: p. 34; Henkelman et al. 2004: p. 41–42; Rahimifar 2005; Razmjou 2008: p. 57). The assemblage consists of some 60 uninscribed sealed clay documents and three actual cylinder seals. The discovery of the material in the fortification wall, as the Fortification archive on the Takht, suggests that the towers and rooms in the fortification wall were convenient areas of archival storage. None of the clay documents carry text; hence, we do not know the exact function of the material. Some of the documents resemble uninscribed documents from the Fortification archive (Rahimifar 2005: pl. 16); others are circular, elliptical, or squared and appear to be letter-bullae (Rahimifar 2005: pl. 17–23). There are at least eight distinct seals preserved on the clay documents, one of which also occurs on “labels” from the Treasury archive, PTS 28 (Tadjvidi 1976: p. 195, figs. 140–41; Rahimifar 2005 pl. 18; Tallis 2005: p. 231, no. 424; Schmidt 1957: pl. 9 no. 28). As a glyptic assemblage, the seals from the Šāhi Kūh exhibit many similarities to those from the Treasury archive; a direct connection between these two archives cannot be ruled out. Although relatively few in number, the seals from the mountain fortification archive include both Achaemenid court-centric iconography and Greek imagery. The glyptic material from the mountain fortification archive probably dates to approximately the same period as the Treasury archive.

Susa

Concerning Susa, the evidence for archives is fragmentary (as is often the case in the archaeology of the site). The number of actual seals of Achaemenid date found at the site is small; they are executed in various styles of carving, none of which could be characterized as Persepolitan Court Style.⁶ The seals preserved as impressions are likewise few in number but give glimpses of what may have been official state archives at the site (Henkelman 2008a: pp. 78, 110–115; 2012: p. 954). There is a fine heroic encounter executed in the Persepolitan Court Style preserved on a clay bulla (Amiet 1972: no. 2203). Most importantly, there is an Elamite document (Sb 13078), dated to 500/499 BCE, that clearly originates from an archive at Susa similar to the Fortification archive at Persepolis (Stolper in Harper et al. 1992: p. 273; Garrison 1996). The text belongs to a well-known type at Persepolis, and the tablet, remarkably, bears impressions of PFS 7*, one of the royal-name seals from the Fortification archive. Although the exact find-spot of the tablet is not documented, it must clearly have come from the excavations of the French mission at Susa. This single text documents what one would naturally expect, Fortification-type archives at important centers throughout the empire, but especially along the royal road. The occurrence of PFS 7* at Susa is also not

surprising, since the officials associated with this type of transaction appear to have traveled with the king as he moved between capital cities. Nonetheless, the preservation of the text and PFS 7* at Susa bears witness to, in a spectacular fashion, one aspect of the administrative infrastructure of the Achaemenid imperial phenomenon.

Daskyleion

Another important archive that apparently is directly connected to official Achaemenid administration comes from the satrapal capital Daskyleion in northwestern Anatolia (Kaptan 2002). The archive consists exclusively of uninscribed bullae and contains some 185 discrete seals (Figures 21.3–21.6). The exact find context of the archive is, unfortunately, unclear. The bullae for the most part were attached to documents written on papyrus and, in a few cases, parchment (Kaptan 2002: pp. 13–16). In this sense the Daskyleion archive then is distinct from those at Persepolis and Susa, where true (letter-) bullae are exceptionally rare. Because of their discovery at Daskyleion and the appearance of three royal-name seals, DS 2 (Xerxes), DS 3 (Xerxes) (Figure 21.6), and DS 4 (Artaxerxes), it is generally assumed that the bullae are remnants of some aspect of the official paperwork of the satrapal administration at the site. The date of the archive can be established only through a stylistic analysis of the seal images and the names in the three royal-name seals. The date is thus broad, from the reign of Xerxes (486–465 BCE) to the first quarter of the fourth century BCE (Kaptan 2002: p. 27).

The most common method of sealing at Daskyleion is the single-seal protocol, but two-, three-, and four-seal documents are attested. Many seals occur on multiple documents. These patterns of sealing are very similar to what one sees at Persepolis (Garrison 2008).

Memphis

A potentially important analogue for the glyptic material from Daskyleion is a small collection of seal impressions from Memphis in Egypt (Petrie et al. 1910: pp. 41–42, pl. XXIV; Colburn 2019: pp. 50, 53–71). Like Daskyleion, Memphis was a satrapal headquarters. Unfortunately, the site is inadequately excavated and the early excavations are poorly documented (Colburn 2019: pp. 30–45).

Excavations by Petrie in the early twentieth century in a structure identified as the palace yielded a small corpus of sealed uninscribed documents and wooden labels carrying Aramaic texts. The sealed documents, according to Petrie, came from “parcels,” not papyrus documents.⁷ The documents have

various forms, including small rounded or elliptical pieces of clay and irregularly shaped lumps of clay. Petrie thought that the wooden labels and sealed documents functioned in tandem, but it is unclear exactly what he had in mind. He dated the material to the fifth century BCE based upon its find context.

One group of sealed documents from Memphis consists of the impressions of 21 scaraboids or other types of stamp seals carrying Egyptian hieroglyphic script and/or figural imagery dating from various periods, the oldest (no. 1) being an inscription of Seti I (Petrie et al. 1910: nos. 1–21). These seals occur almost exclusively on small rounded or elliptical lumps of clay.

Another group of sealed documents from Memphis consists of the impressions of 18 cylinder or stamp seals carrying Achaemenid imagery or, in a few cases, hybrid Achaemenid and Egyptianizing imagery (Petrie et al. 1910: nos. 22–39). The quality of the photographs of the documents hinders any detailed stylistic observations, but there does not appear to be anything that one could characterize as Persepolitan Court Style. One of the most intriguing seals is Petrie's no. 22, which preserves the hindquarters of an animal/creature marchant and an impressive Old Persian inscription (SD²a) enclosed in a panel (Petrie et al. 1910: p. 42). Schmitt (1981: pp. 33–34) read the fragmentary inscription as a royal name. Petrie's no. 29 also appears to have a cuneiform inscription, although he did not note this fact in his description of the seal.⁸ The cylinders and stamps occur only on the irregularly shaped lumps of clay.

Correspondence of Aršāma

In some ways contextually related to the material from Memphis and Daskyleion are the famous parchment letters and sealed letter-bullae of the prince and satrap Aršāma.⁹ Aršāma was a satrap of Egypt sometime in the second half of the fifth century BCE (Briant 2002: pp. 364–365, 449–450, 456–458, 461–463, 557, 602–605, 973; Tuplin and Ma 2020). The 26 Aramaic letters and eight associated letter-bullae (Figure 56.2a,b) now in the Bodleian are said to have come from somewhere in Egypt. Although this assemblage of letters and letter-bullae may not be an archive *strictū sensō*, it is an important point of reference concerning archival practices for the Achaemenid period. The letters are principally Aršāma writing from afar to his estate personnel and administrative officials in Egypt authorizing or ordering various operations. There is also a famous travel ration (TADE A6.9) wherein Aršāma authorizes daily travel rations for his steward Nakhthor and 13 other individuals. Seven of the eight letter-bullae are carefully sealed with a large and handsome cylinder seal showing a combat scene; an Aramaic inscription on the seal reads “Seal of Aršām, son of the house” (Garrison and Henkelman 2020b). The eighth letter-bulla is sealed with a large stamp seal; the design is, however, very difficult to read (Garrison, Henkelman, and Kaptan 2020).



Figure 56.2 Oxford, Bodleian Library: Aršāma correspondence, obverse and reverse of letter-bulla Sigill. Aram 5.

Rather stunningly, the cylinder seal applied to the letter-bullae has now been identified on two Elamite documents from the Fortification archive (Garrison and Henkelman 2020b). Thus, when used on the letter-bullae associated with the Aramaic letters of the satrap Aršāma, the seal was an heirloom at least 60 years removed from its original Persepolitan context. Its original owner must surely have been the royal prince Iršāma (OP Aršāma), son of Darius and the queen Irtašduna, mentioned in several texts from the Fortification archive (Garrison 2014a: pp. 496–502; Garrison and Henkelman 2020b). The use of the seal by Aršāma the satrap in the second half of the fifth century BCE attests to the value placed upon certain high-prestige seals within the royal house, a practice richly documented as well in the Fortification archive with the magnificent heirloom seals PFS 51 and PFS 93*, the former belonging to another woman in the royal house, Irdabama (Garrison 2011). All three seals express yet another aspect of the “imaginary” mode of communication, in this case notions of connectedness to the royal house(s) through time.

Unprovenanced Clay “Tags”

Perhaps also potentially coming from an official state archival context is a much traveled collection of at least 42 sealed clay “tags” of uncertain provenance (Figure 56.3).¹⁰ The documents carry no text, only seal impressions. In total 11 quite spectacular seals are involved. The “tags” are triangular in



Figure 56.3 New Haven, Yale Babylonian Collection, YBC 17070: RB 2 impressed on uninscribed tablet.

outline, very similar in shape to many of the uninscribed documents from the Fortification archive (Henkelman et al. 2004: p. 7). Sealing praxis on these documents almost always requires impressions of three or four different seals, and often all five surfaces of the documents are sealed. As the original provenance of this material is unknown, it is perhaps fruitless to say much by way of the function of these documents.

All 11 of the seals are impressively carved cylinders, clearly high-prestige artifacts. Curiously, seven of the 11 seals show either hunt scenes or human combats, which otherwise are rare scene types in Achaemenid glyptic assemblages. The high quality of all the seals and the large percentage of hunts/warfare suggest that some sorting took place in order to appeal to potential buyers when the objects became available on the market. Although the seals are uniformly of high quality, the seal RB 2 stands out as especially impressive, an animal combat with a figure in a winged ring and an Aramaic inscription, rendered in the Achaemenid imperial Modeled Style (Figure 56.3). RB 5 is similarly grand, a hunter spearing a lion attacking a humped bull with an elaborate winged ring in the upper field. The Persian court robe and winged symbols are very common among the 11 seals; two of the seals are inscribed (RB 1 and RB 2). The universally fine, and in some cases virtuosic, carving of these seals as a group is matched perhaps only by the seals applied to the letter-orders from the Treasury archive.

Wadi ed-Daliyeh, Samaria

A substantial corpus of sealed letter-bullae and their associated papyri comes from Wadi ed-Daliyeh (Cave 1) in Samaria (Leith 1997).¹¹ The papyri were legal and administrative documents, written in Aramaic, originating from the province or city of Samaria. Date formulae in some of the texts place the surviving corpus from 375 BCE to not long after 334 BCE (Leith 1997: pp. 5–6). The texts concern local matters exclusively. A few of the letter-bullae were still attached to papyrus documents, and many of the loose letter-bullae still had string (Leith 1997: pl. 22). As is typical for letter-bullae, most of them were round or oval in shape, the backs preserving impressions of the strings and folded papyrus documents.

Leith (1997) published 61 distinct (and legible) seals preserved on the letter-bullae (see Garrison and Root 2001: p. 38). Unfortunately, it was not possible to link any of the seals with any of the individuals named in the texts; the general consensus is that the seals belonged to members of the local elite (Leith 1997: pp. 6, 22, and 32; Garrison and Root 2001: pp. 38–39). The seals used to make the impressions are almost exclusively stamps and signet rings (Leith 1997: p. 23). The imagery on the seals is quite varied, including

paleo-Hebrew inscriptions, various Greek carving styles, hybrid Greek-Phoenician styles, and Achaemenid court-centric iconography rendered in various local carving styles. Achaemenid court-centric iconography is, however, relatively rare in this corpus, and there is nothing that one could qualify as Persepolitan Court Style.

Babylonia

There are many archival documents spanning the Late Babylonian and Achaemenid periods from Babylonia (Pedersen 1998: pp. 181–213; Garrison and Root 2001: pp. 37–38; Balzer 2007). These archives are almost exclusively from temple and private business contexts. Two of the most important archives that contain substantial numbers of sealed documents (and are relatively well published) are those associated with the Ebabbar of Šamaš at Sippar and the Eanna of Ištar at Uruk.

Of the thousands of tablets from the Sippar archive, only a small percentage has been published.¹² The archive dates from the reign of the Late Babylonian king Nabopolassar down into the second year of Xerxes (c. 625–486 BCE). Balzer reports that only approximately 440+ of the over 30 000 tablets dating to the Achaemenid period from the Ebabarra now housed at the British Museum are sealed; this yields a fairly low percentage of sealed tablets (approximately 15%). A selection of letter-orders carrying some 67 distinct seals is the primary glyptic assemblage that is readily accessible (MacGinnis 1995: pp. 164–181). As the letter-orders often have multiple authors, as many as three different seals may appear on a document (MacGinnis 1995: p. 166; in one instance, there are four seals applied to a document). Cylinder seals by far are more common than stamp seals. MacGinnis (1995: pp. 165–171) has been able to detect some correlations between officials and seal format and/or imagery. The glyptic imagery of this group of 67 seals, widely dispersed in date, is almost completely Babylonian.

The archive from the Eanna of Ištar at Uruk consists of some 8000 tablets (Ehrenberg 1999: p. 10). The archive dates from Nabopolassar through the 22nd year of Darius I (c. 612–499 BCE) (Ehrenberg 1999: p. 13). As with most of these Babylonian archives, many of the documents were excavated illicitly and reside today in various collections (Ehrenberg 1999: pp. 2 and 11; Balzer 2007: Chapter II, p. 56). Similar to the Ebabbar, only a small percentage of the documents from the Eanna are sealed, approximately 2% (Ehrenberg 1999: p. 33). Ehrenberg (1999) has published in an exemplary manner some 219 seal impressions from the Eanna.¹³ The number of distinct seals among these 219 impressions appears to be approximately 147. The sealed documents consist principally of receipts for commodities, letter-orders, and lists of itemized goods, personnel, or payments. Documents carry normally only one

or two seals. Cylinder and stamp seals occur in approximately equal numbers (Ehrenberg 1999: p. 34). In general, determining who used the seal is not possible within the archive (Ehrenberg 1999: pp. 34–36). Because of the early date of the archive and its provenance, the glyptic imagery is highly restricted in thematic content (worship scenes and heroic encounters) and has no Achaemenid court-centric iconography.

One of the most well-known archives from the Achaemenid period is the business records associated with the Murašû family at Nippur, dated to the period 454–404 BCE (Stolper 1985; Donbaz and Stolper 1997; Bregstein 1993, 1996; Balzer 2007: Chapter II, pp. 57–58, Chapter XVIII, pp. 6–8). Unlike many of the Babylonian archives, the tablets of the Murašû firm have a documented context, found in a single room in a house on what was called Camp Hill (Bregstein 1993: pp. 20–23). The primary types of texts are receipts for payments of rents and taxes, certificates of debt against real security (“mortgages”), and leases (Bregstein 1993: pp. 42–45). The texts come predominantly from Nippur, but there are also texts from the surrounding region, Babylon, and Susa. Balzer (2007) counts some 868 published tablets and fragments from the archive. Over 600 of these tablets are sealed, preserving over 700 different seals.¹⁴ By Babylonian standards, this is a very high percentage of sealed documents. Sealing praxis varied by transaction type, but most transactions required the impressions of seals of multiple witnesses (Bregstein 1993: pp. 304–363).

There are more seals preserved in the Murašû archive than any other Babylonian archive of Achaemenid date, and the glyptic material is of an extremely high quality. The fact that a comprehensive accounting and documentation of the seal impressions preserved in this archive has yet to be published remains something of a mystery. Bregstein’s (1993) unpublished dissertation remains the only monographic treatment of the glyptic from this archive. She includes some 657 distinct seals in her catalog, with an approximately equal distribution of cylinders, stamps, and signet rings (Bregstein 1993: pp. 53, 294). Since many of the seal impressions were accompanied by captions, a very high percentage of the seals can be associated with specific individuals named in the texts (Bregstein 1993: pp. 109–377, 1996).

As a comprehensive publication of the seals is yet to be made, it is perhaps premature to make far-reaching conclusions concerning trends in glyptic theme, composition, iconography, and style. Not surprisingly, the glyptic imagery from the archive is strongly Babylonianizing.

Ur

Lastly, from a coffin at Ur in Babylonia comes a most remarkable assemblage of impressed artifacts in lumps of clay.¹⁵ The impressions were made by seals, coins, and metalwear. The material appears to date from a wide-ranging period,

c. eighth century BCE down to the late fourth century BCE or later (Collon 1996: pp. 66 and 78; Mitchell and Searight 2008: p. 169). Most of the seal impressions are small stamp seals or signet rings; in some cases an image exists in multiple impressions. All of the impressions had been fired in antiquity (Collon 1996: p. 66). Interestingly, six of the seal “impressions” are in sunk relief (Mitchell and Searight 2008: p. 8, “in intaglio”), indicating that they were made by pressing the clay onto an ancient seal impression. The glyptic imagery is diverse. Greek themes and cutting styles dominate, but there is also a variety of carving styles exhibiting Achaemenid court-centric iconography and a few Assyro-Babylonian heirlooms. There is one very excellent cylinder seal that shows a hunt scene with two crowned figures in the Persian Court robe, with a winged disk in the upper field, clearly Persepolitan Court Style (Collon 1996: p. 68, pl. 12a; Collon in Merrillees 2005: p. 81, pl. 34a).

Most commentators interpret the material as a collection of models for use by an artist, perhaps even a seal cutter. The assemblage is a striking testament to yet another aspect of the “imaginary” mode of glyptic imagery, the perpetuation of specific imagery via systematic retrieval and collecting.

NOTES

- 1 Cassin (1987) is a provocative discussion of the relationship of the seal to the individual; Winter (2001: pp. 2–3) reviews related issues.
- 2 Marcus (1996) presents an excellent case study suggesting that glyptic style marked group affiliation at Hasanlu. See also Garrison (2014a,b, and 2017) for Persepolitan glyptic.
- 3 For introductions and/or surveys of the Fortification archive, see: Hallock 1969: pp. 1–69, 1977, 1978, and 1985; Hinz 1970 and 1971; Lewis 1977: pp. 4–14, 1984: pp. 592–602, 1990, and 1994; Dandamaev and Lukonin 1989: pp. 90–237; Koch 1990 and 1992: pp. 25–67; Wiesehöfer 2001: pp. 66–79, 268–270; Garrison and Root 2001: pp. 1–60; Briant 2002: pp. 422–448, 938–943; Kuhrt 2007: pp. 763–814; Arfae 2008; Henkelman 2008a: pp. 65–179; Garrison 2017: pp. 27–75; Azzoni et al. 2017.
- 4 Henkelman (see Chapter 62 Persia) states that in size the territory administered by the Persepolis Fortification archive was approximately the same as modern Switzerland.
- 5 See Stolper and Tavernier (2007: pp. 3–4 and 23–25), with previous bibliography, on *unica* within the archive.
- 6 Amiet 1972: nos. 2204–2225. Several of the seals classified as Neo-Elamite in Amiet 1972 could easily be Achaemenid in date based upon the evidence of the Fortification archive (e.g. Amiet 1972: nos. 2128–2129, 2171–2179, 2181–2183, 2186–2187). Only a handful of seals has been discovered in excavations subsequent to 1967.

- 7 The backs of the documents were not published, and, unfortunately, the material was lost in World War II. Thus, we are unable to confirm Petrie's observations or to glean more about the types of objects to which these documents were attached.
- 8 Petrie, Mackay, and Wainwright (1910: nos. 41–50) also published another 10 sealed documents or seals coming from various parts of the palace and his Memphis-Meidum excavations. Most of these seals are Egyptian scaraboids. No. 46, “found about the palace,” appears to be a rather handsome cylinder seal showing an elaborate composite human/animal archer scene (see Garrison 2010: pp. 341–350 for the type).
- 9 The dossier concerning prince Aršāma is an extensive one. The most well-known parts of it are 14 mostly well preserved and 12 fragmentary Aramaic letters written on parchment and eight sealed letter-bullae presumably originally associated with the letters, now housed in the Bodleian Library at Oxford (Porten and Yardeni 1986: nos. A6.3–6.16, D6.3–6.14; Garrison, Henkelman, and Kaptan 2020). Tuplin and Ma (2020) provide a new edition of the letters of Aršāma now at Oxford as well as a detailed analysis of the letters, bullae, and the complete dossier on the satrap Aršāma.
- 10 Henkelman et al. (2004) carefully track the record of publication and current disposition of these artifacts, which can be traced back to Scheil (1901): 21 in the Böhl Collection of NINO, one in the former Böhl collection at Groningen, 14 in the Musée du Louvre, three in the Yale Babylonian Collection, two in the Bibliothèque Nationale, one in the former Crozer collection. As the authors note, Scheil (1901) described the imagery of one seal that is not found on any of the known 42 documents; hence there is at least one more document that belongs with this group. Scheil (1901: p. 567) said that the tags came from Telloh, but Goetze (1944: p. 97) was skeptical, as also Henkelman et al. (2004: p. 16); see also the comments of Garrison and Root (2001: p. 37).
- 11 Nomadic tribesmen made the initial discoveries in the cave; excavation followed thereafter, but the bulk of the papyri and sealed letter-bullae, known today as the Samaria Papyri, were acquired through purchase from the tribesmen (as also two gold rings that appear to have come from the cave).
- 12 See Balzer (2007: Chapter III, pp. 63–65, Chapter XVIII, pp. 15–16) for a discussion of the sealed documents from the Ebabbara and a list of all published tablets of Achaemenid date from Sippar.
- 13 See Balzer (2007: Chapter XVIII, p. 5) for a list of all published sealed documents of Achaemenid date from Uruk. In many instances the same seal occurs in multiple impressions.
- 14 Balzer (2007: Chapter II, p. 58). On the number of seals, Balzer (2007: Chapter II, p. 58 note 22) reports: “Hatte Legrain in PBS XIV etwa 200 Murašû-Siegel bekannt gemacht, konnte der Autor beim Studium der

- Tafeloriginale in Philadelphia über 700 individuelle Siegel identifizieren.”
- 15 See Garrison and Root (2001: p. 39) with previous bibliography to which one should add Mitchell and Searight (2008: pp. 168–181, nos. 525–88), who publish the seal impressions and include an important discussion of the probable archeological context of the coffin.

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CHAPTER 57

Royal Coinage

Matthias Hoernes

Introduction: Coins in Context

Ancient coins are objects in flux. As objects of research, they afford a plethora of shifting perspectives from various academic disciplines, each with a specific array of questions and methodologies. As archeological objects, coins tend to “float” since they often do not come from scientific excavations and lack secure data concerning their provenance and archeological context. Most essentially, however, ancient coins as material objects are extremely mobile, passing multiple stages on their itinerary that are beyond our knowledge even if we are informed about their production or depositional context. While crossing different spatial, cultural, and social contexts, coins maintain their material qualities as well as their intrinsic value, but their function(s) and meaning may transform. As money, bullion, or gifts, they obey various modes of movement and practices of exchange that are far from being identical in significance but which leave no material trace and are thus disguised in the archeological record. For the most part, ancient coins are “money” (though “money” and “coins” are anything but interchangeable), i.e. following economic anthropologist Karl Polanyi, a generally accepted commodity that serves as a measure of value and a unit of account, a means of payment and exchange as well as a medium for the accumulation of wealth (cf. Möller 2004; Jursa 2010: pp. 469–472). Ancient coins exceed this economic function, however. As medial signifiers and channels of communication, for instance, they broadcast “messages” that a

political authority wants to disseminate. They are subject to – as well as vehicles of – politics, ideology, and mentalities, with all these semantic and functional strata being culturally and contextually specific. But coins do not merely feature or “reflect,” say, ideological concepts and ideas: they have generative capacities as well, construing these concepts and playing along in political and cultural negotiations on their own terms.

By assessing coins in their respective material, cultural, and historical contexts, the objective of this chapter is to outline the development of the Achaemenid coinage from its Lydian prequel and to contextualize the subsequent regal series in three cultural frameworks: in Lydia, from where both the Achaemenid series and the earliest coins in general originate; in Iran, where the imagery and the ideological program of the regal coinage have their roots; and in Greece, where the Achaemenid gold coins circulated as high-value currency. It is important to bear in mind, however, that the Achaemenid-period monetary system was much more complex and heterogeneous than this, never coinciding with political boundaries (for overviews, see Alam 2012; Tuplin 2014; Corfù 2010; Le Rider 2001; seminal studies are Carradice 1987; Stronach 1989; Root 1989; Alam 1993; Mildenberg 1993; Vargyas 2000; Nimchuk 2002): (1a) the Achaemenid gold coins, the so-called darics, were the highest-quality gold currency in the fifth and fourth centuries BCE Mediterranean and circulated around the Aegean in Asia Minor, Greece, and Sicily as well as in Egypt and Cyprus; (1b) the silver coins, known as sigloi, served as a regal, though regional, currency in Asia Minor. It is on these two regal coin series that the chapter focuses, but the Achaemenids were never at pains to establish darics and sigloi as the single valid currency in their empire: (2) satraps and other officials mainly in Asia Minor issued manifold series of royal coinage under Achaemenid auspices since the later fifth century BCE (Müseler 2018; Bodzek 2014; Alam 2012; Mildenberg 1993); (3) local dynasts and Greek and Phoenician cities in present-day Turkey and the Levant were allowed to strike their own coinage and (4) “foreign” coinages such as the Athenian tetradrachms expanded into the Achaemenid Empire as well.

Lydia: From the Cradle of Coinage to the Coinage of an Empire

The history of Achaemenid coinage did not commence in Iran but in western Anatolia (for the “invention” of money and coinage, see Le Rider 2001; Schaps 2004; Kroll 2012). When Cyrus II (559–530 BCE) penetrated the territories west of the Taurus and subjected Lydia in the 540s BCE, the Achaemenids encountered a well-organized coinage system with a high-level metallurgy (Ramage and Craddock 2000). The question of when the first coins were

issued at the Lydian capital of Sardis is the subject of intense debate. The earliest specimens surfaced among at least 41 electrum coins which had been laid down as foundation deposits beneath the Artemision of Ephesus in its second building phase (Naos 2), now dated to 640/20 BCE, which seems to indicate a date around the mid-seventh century BCE for the beginning of coinage in Ionia and Lydia (Kerschner and Konuk 2020; Wartenberg 2016; Dale 2015; Konuk 2012: pp. 48–49). These early Lydian coins mostly sported a lion's head on the obverse and were issued as various fractional denominations of a stater weighing around 14.1 g. They were minted in electrum, a gold-and-silver alloy that has long been thought to be naturally occurring alluvial gold with a high silver content derived from the Pactolus river, though a recent analysis argues for an artificial nature of the alloy and the existence of multiple sources of the raw materials, partly outside the Lydian heartland (Cahill et al. 2020). The silver–gold proportion of the Lydian coins was rather consistent, but other electrum coins were poorly suited for dependable monetary exchange as their gold content could vary in nature or be artificially manipulated by the addition of refined silver. Therefore, when exchanged, the intrinsic metallic value had to be tested by rubbing the coins on a touchstone.

In a pioneering reform around the mid-sixth century BCE, the last Mermnad king, Croesus (conventionally dated to 560–547; but cf. Rollinger and Kellner 2019), addressed this dilemma. He substituted the electrum coinage for a bimetallic coinage system that was based on the intrinsic value of pure gold and silver and ensured a precise exchange rate. The wealth of Lydia embodied by his coins is shrouded in legend in archaic and classical Greek sources (cf. Michels 2012), but Herodotus is probably right to appreciate the Lydians as the “first humans we know who minted and used gold and silver currency” (1.94.1). As ancient authors refer to gold coins labeled as *Kroiseioi stateres* and credited Croesus with having initiated them, the earliest extant gold series from Lydia have conventionally been identified as “croeseids” since the 1830s CE. For a long time, this assumption seemed to beg the question of their originator, as none of the croeseids from securely datable contexts could be attributed to the reign of Croesus. Now, however, new finds from Sardis have substantiated the old chronological orthodoxy that Croesus himself issued and presumably introduced the Lydian gold and silver series (Cahill and Kroll 2005).

Adapting the motif of the preceding electrum ones, the croeseids depict the confronted heads and extended single legs of a lion with open mouth and a horned bull in combat (Figure 57.1). The reverse bears two square incuse punch marks on the larger denominations, one square on the smaller ones. The silver series was struck as staters at a “heavy” standard of c. 10.7 g and as half-staters of 5.38 g. Some gold issues correlate with the “heavy” silver standard, others are on a “lighter” standard of about 8.06 g. Both the silver and gold series came in various fractions that made the high-value and exceptionally



Figure 57.1 Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum MK_GR32790: Croeseid gold stater. Source: Reproduced by permission of the KHM-Museumsverband.

pure croeseids suitable for retail trade. The three major scholars of the croeseids, Naster (1965, 1976), Carradice (1987), and Nimchuk (2000), have determined two chronological phases that are characterized by stylistic variations as well as metrological differences. In the first phase (“early” group), the obverse motif is rendered relatively naturalistically and emblazons gold and silver croeseids of the heavy standard as well as the lighter gold specimens. By contrast, the obverse animals of the second phase (“late” group) are more stylized and coincide with light gold and silver coins. “Early” and “late” croeseids never appear mingled with each other in hoards, but “late” silver coins occur together with Achaemenid silver sigloi in early fifth-century hoards and therefore seem to have come into use after a temporal gap. Yet, the tempting corollary that Croesus issued the “early” series and the “later” ones postdate his defeat by Cyrus II is not corroborated by the evidence of datable hoards. Future research will be confronted with the challenge of winnowing out the issues struck during Croesus’ reign from those minted after his demise, and of reassessing the chronology on the basis of the overall evidence.

Whatever the solution will be, the Persian conquest of Lydia in the 540s BCE did not cause a gap. As coin hoards with croeseids, both gold and silver, continue, and “genuine” Achaemenid series are unknown before Darius (522/1–486 BCE), it is generally assumed that croeseids were minted under Persian rule too. It has even been hypothesized that all croeseids postdated Croesus’ fall and are to be identified as early Persian, not Lydian, coinage in their totality (Le Rider 2001: pp. 101–121; Price 1984); this post-Croesus assumption, however, is now refuted by lion-and-bull coins which have surfaced in a pre-destruction

level at Sardis (Cahill and Kroll 2005). As most scholars agree, the Sardian mint continued to strike croeseids for at least three decades after the death of Croesus, until almost the end of the sixth century BCE. Cyrus was well advised not to withdraw coins from monetized Lydia, especially as the Iranian heartland was short on coinage experience and the new sovereigns were not able to inaugurate their own series then and there. Besides economic necessity, it may be assumed that the Persian kings adopted the Lydian coinage as a royal prerogative to demonstrate continuity in the eyes of their Lydian subjects (cf. Tuplin 2014: p. 136). The animal imagery of the croeseids suits this purpose well, since representations of lions and bulls look back on a long artistic and ideological trajectory in both Lydia and Persia. In Sardis, lions predominate among the local Achaemenid-period sculptures and may be associated with Cybele, the protectress of the city, as well as with the royal lineage (Dusinberre 2003: pp. 100–103, 224–226), and on the sculptured facades of later Achaemenid residences, such as that at Persepolis, the ubiquitous lions, bulls, and lion-and-bull groups likewise conjure up the semantic field of royalty (Root 2002).

Iran: Coining and Communicating an Imperial Ideology

From a Persian perspective, however, the continued issuing of croeseids may have been regarded as “passive acquiescence in an existing west Anatolian cultural oddity” (Tuplin 2014: p. 136). In contrast to the abundant evidence from first-millennium Babylonia (Jursa 2010: pp. 469–753), evidence for the economic role of silver in the heartland of Iran is hard to assess but is best tackled via the documentary sources from Persepolis (Tamerus 2016). Whereas the tablets from the Fortification archive (509–493 BCE) register payments made entirely in food commodities, most of the documents from the Treasury archive (492–457 BCE) bear witness to payments made, or at least declared, in weight units of silver (*karsha* and shekel) instead of payments in kind. As the two archives represent different branches of administration and have different regional scopes, however, this contrast, though striking, cannot be taken as evidence of a change in remuneration and payment practices, or in administrative customs. The “monetization” or, rather, “silverization” (van der Spek 2011) of the Persepolis economy must have been a gradual process which did not set in out of the blue and may have started some time earlier.

Moreover, this means neither that uncoined silver was converted into exclusive legal tender nor that silver coins were established in Iran. Barter and exchange economy continued to be common practice, and coined money is not mentioned in the documentary evidence either from Persepolis, presently being deciphered (Tuplin 2014: p. 129; cf. Tamerus 2016), or from

Achaemenid-period Babylonia (Jursa 2010: pp. 480–485; contra Vargyas 1999). This fits well with the fact that at both Persepolis and Susa coins are extremely scarce in the excavations. While this is in part due to the looting of the palaces, it also indicates the lack of coin circulation in Iran. In lieu of “proper” coins, different forms and formats of uncoined silver bullion served as money of account and currency by weight, as both textual sources and silver hoards assembling complete silverware as well as miscellaneous fragments of cut vessels, coins, jewelry, and ingots attest (“Hacksilber”; e.g. Reade 1986). Notwithstanding the coinage systems at its western fringe, the trade in major parts of the empire remained based on various forms of weighed silver instead of counted coins. Likewise, the empire’s complex tribute and taxation system included payments in (weighed) silver at the local and regional level, as the Babylonian cuneiform texts attest (e.g. Jursa 2011). The Aramaic customs documents from Persian Egypt deliver further insights into these taxation-related transactions, showing that Ionian and Phoenician ships were still paying duty in weighed gold and silver in 475 BCE (though this may include coins handled as bullion; Cottier 2012; cf. van Alfen 2004–2005). As far as the economic system of its heartland was concerned, there was no need at all for the empire to have its own distinct Persian coinage.

While Cyrus had adopted the Lydian coinage as it stood, Darius (522/1–486 BCE) suspended the croeseids and initiated his own coin series in silver and gold at Sardis. When Darius’ reform took effect is a matter of debate, with the proposed dates ranging from his accession to the throne in 522 to 490 BCE, but the last decade of the sixth century or some years earlier seems most likely (see below; Tuplin 2014: pp. 135–136 with references). Darius’ new gold coin is referred to as *Dareikos stater* in Greek sources and continues to be termed “daric” today, but we do not know what either his gold or silver coins were called in Old Persian. It has been assumed that the Greek term was based on the name “Darius” only in folk etymology but comes from a postulated Iranian root *dārika- for “golden” (Brust 2005: pp. 238–244; Le Rider 2001: pp. 145–148). This assumption seems hypercritical, as other Greek names of famous gold coinage such as the *Kroiseioi* or the later *Philippeioi* refer to those who instituted them. The term “siglos” for the silver coins is Greek too and derives from the old Mesopotamian *šiglu*/shekel weight standard that was adopted in Achaemenid times. Paradoxically, it is not the siglos but the gold series whose weight was based on the shekel standard. Darius raised the weight of his gold coins, in comparison with the croeseid standard, from 8.06 g to 8.36 g to adapt it to the shekel. By contrast, the silver sigloi maintained the croeseid standard of 5.38 g initially. The alignment of the gold coins with the shekel weight standard may have facilitated their use as (weighed) bullion beyond Asia Minor, but it had significant consequences. Gold and silver coins were no longer easily convertible, especially as the elaborate fractional system

that made the Lydian coins suitable for small-scale transactions went by the board. This metrological mismatch may appear, from a purely economic perspective, to be a setback compared with the interrelated Lydian system. It was probably Xerxes (486–465 BCE) who finally facilitated the exchange by lifting the siglos weight to 5.57 g and establishing henceforth a tidy currency rate, with 20 sigloi equaling one daric.

Maybe this initial mismatch did not pose a serious challenge, as the gold and silver coins had different patterns of circulation and distribution, with the sigloi almost exclusively confined to Asia Minor and the darics, though in minor quantities, circulating throughout the eastern Mediterranean. Hence, it is not by chance that darics and sigloi are never hoarded together (Corfù 2010: p. 174). What unites them, however, is that they remained few and far between in the empire's heartland. Hoards containing regal silver and gold coins are extremely rare in Iran and Mesopotamia and are restricted to the fourth century BCE; they contain only very small numbers of sigloi, and even fewer darics (Corfù 2010: pp. 170–177). If regal coins played any role in the Mesopotamian and Iranian economies, it is invisible today. To understand why Darius initiated these novel series and to grasp their significance in the cultural and political framework of Achaemenid Iran, we rather have to focus on their ideological and communicative dimension (Root 1989; Nimchuk 2002; Garrison 2010).

The conspicuous imagery of Darius' coins abandons the last vestige of the Lydian legacy. While the double punch marks of the croeseids are replaced with a single elongate incuse on the reverse, the new obverse design depicts the king as an archer. The archer, to whom darics and sigloi owe their Greek nickname *toxótai*, “archers,” comes in four main typological variants (Figure 57.2) that were established by E.S.G. Robinson (1958) and refined by Ian Carradice (1987), David Stronach (1989), and Michael Alram (1993). Type I, to date known only in silver and rather sparsely attested, displays the archer as a half-figure from the waist up, facing right, holding a bow, which is strung but not drawn, in his left hand and two arrows in his right. He wears a tall dentate headdress or a crown with spikes and a long court robe. On type II, minted in silver and (documented to a lesser extent) in gold, the bearded archer-king now appears as a full-length figure but in a kneeling position. In contrast to the previous type, he draws his bow and has a quiver on his back (Figure 57.3). On type III, in both gold and silver and in three stylistic subtypes, the archer is depicted in a kneeling-running pose (“Knielauf”) and thrusts his bow forward in his left hand, while holding a transverse spear in his right hand (Figure 57.4). Type IV (with two stylistic subtypes) is a variant of type III, replacing the spear in the king's right hand with a short dagger (Figure 57.5). Type I and II archer coins as well as the initial subtype IIIa were issued in the reign of Darius, either in parallel or at least in close

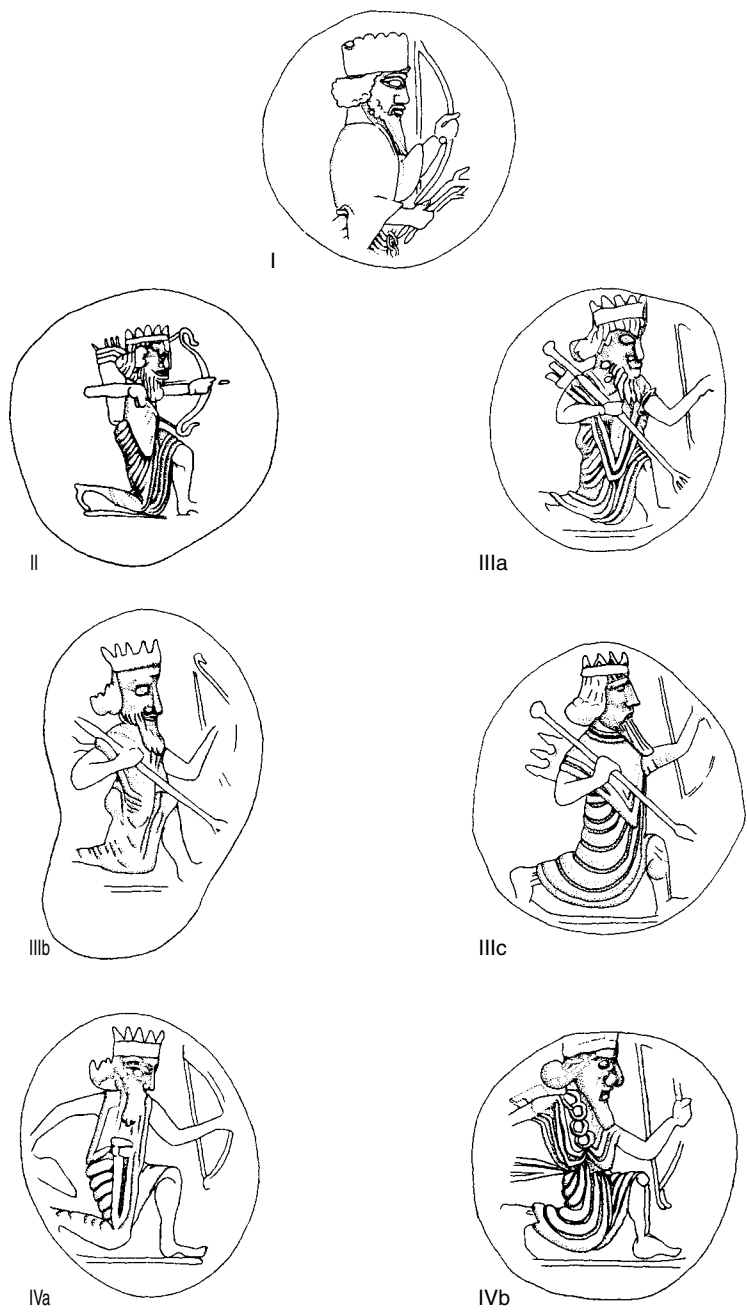


Figure 57.2 Daric and siglos types. Source: Reproduced by permission of D. Stronach (Stronach 1989: Fig. 1).



Figure 57.3 Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, coll. Louis De Clercq 429: Daric of type II. Source: Reproduced by permission of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France.



Figure 57.4 Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum MK_GR023185: Daric of type III. Source: Reproduced by permission of the KHM-Museumsverband.



Figure 57.5 Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France R 3681.1: Daric of type IV. Source: Reproduced by permission of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

succession. The later varieties of type III, and type IV, which were minted in much greater quantities than the preceding types, were introduced slightly later, in the time of Xerxes, and remained in use until Alexander brought about the downfall of the Achaemenid Empire (Alram 2012: p. 68; Le Rider 2001: pp. 128–133).

Although Darius' series were struck at Sardis on the fringe of the Persian domain (for the mint, see Le Rider 2001: pp. 133–139; Alram 2012: pp. 68–69), their imagery conveys a “particular message out from the heart of the empire” (Root 1991: p. 15). Since the late 1950s CE, the archer figure has stirred debate about whether it represents a divine figure or a hero-like king of old (Stronach 1989: pp. 266–268). Today, the archer is generally accepted as representing the notion of the king and kingship in Achaemenid Iran, blending several ideological concepts and iconographic elements. As archer-kings, Darius and his successors do not represent their individual persons but embody a conceptual, generic, and timeless persona (cf. Root 1989: p. 46; Müseler 2020: p. 72).

First of all, the archer imagery resonates with centuries-old iconographic traditions in Mesopotamian and Iranian art. In the specific context of Achaemenid Iran, the emblematic archer-king must be considered in conjunction with other medial representations of the king that employ “the same visual vocabulary” but have their “own distinctive syntax” (Garrison

2010: p. 352). Despite differences in content and context, both the sculptured facade of Darius' tomb at Naqš-i Rostam and the rock monument at Bisitun depict the king holding a bow in his left hand, although here resting it on his foot. At Naqš-i Rostam, high-ranking courtiers, among them the king's lance carrier, are depicted to the left and right of the platform on which Darius is standing. Similarly, both a bow and a spear bearer accompany Darius in positions of honor on the rock relief at Bisitun. On the monumental reliefs Darius himself holds the bow, though never the spear, as the archer-king of the type III coins does. On an ideological level, however, both weapons are intrinsically linked to the king. Accordingly, in the inscription accompanying the Naqš-i Rostam relief, the king promulgates his martial power, proclaiming: "As a horseman I am a good horseman. As a bowman I am a good bowman both afoot and on horseback. As a spearman I am a good spearman both afoot and on horseback" (DNb §2h). Darius calls upon the viewer to look at the representatives of subject nations who carry the platform and boasts, "Then you shall perceive, then it shall become known to you, 'The spear of the Persian man has gone far'; then shall it become known to you, 'The Persian man has delivered battle far away from Persia'" (DNa §4). In contrast to the monumental representations, the specific syntax of the small-format coin imagery merges the king and his bow and spear. Both the kingly weapons and the underlying ideological claim are conflated in the emblematic archer-king, the "Persian man" par excellence. These parallels substantiate the idea that monumental representations and coins form two strands of the same medial and iconographic program under Darius (cf. Tuplin 2017).

Besides this generic congruence, more specific elements of the coin images have been compared with the rock reliefs and coeval seal-images to find iconographic analogies, some compelling, some less so (Stronach 1989: pp. 266–268). On the type I archer coins, the posture of the king is evocative of the calm and timelessly dignified Darius of the Naqš-i Rostam relief or the victorious king on the Bisitun monument, but there are no monumental representations of the king shown half-length. This peculiar "half-figure" format also distinguishes type I from subsequent types. It has been argued that it resembles the format of the half-figures emerging from winged rings or disks on both seal images and stone reliefs, such as the one in front of Darius at Bisitun. There is much debate surrounding this emblem, particularly as to whether it symbolizes Ahuramazda or the royal **farnah-* (Jacobs 2017). Similar half-figure tropes are well documented among the coeval seal impressions from the Persepolis Fortification archive, where they are used for depicting numinous beings. Based on these analogies, Mark B. Garrison has argued (2010: pp. 339–351; cf. Nimchuk 2002: p. 65) that the rendition of the king as half-figure on the type I coins evokes semantic allusions to the "numinous qualities of Achaemenid kingship" (cf. Rollinger 2011).

Although this is a tempting interpretation, the iconographic analogies are far from exact as, for instance, these flying half-figures never hold a bow. Moreover, the hypothesis requires the postulation that the form of the coin itself substitutes for the ring or disk from which the figure emerges (Tuplin 2014: pp. 139–141).

For the type II archer, who is about to shoot an invisible adversary, immediate iconographic parallels are few and far between too. The dynamic, action-oriented rendering is distinct from the imagery of the Achaemenid monumental reliefs, and isolated bowmen do not occur in either monumental or glyptic art (Stronach 1989: pp. 270–271). Although direct equivalences are thus lacking, Mark B. Garrison (2000: pp. 134–141 and 2010: pp. 351–355) has demonstrated that the imagery of the type II archers is modeled after the visual repertoire of late sixth–early fifth century BCE seal workshops. Images of standing or kneeling archers, mostly hunting heroes, who shoot predators attacking other animals or aim at isolated creatures, figure prominently among the Persepolis seal impressions. It could be argued that the type II archer adopts such glyptic archer figures by extracting them from their narrative context and conferring the trope on the king. In iconological terms, the king may be represented as a “super-hero” (Stronach 1989: p. 272) who is not only a battle-trained warrior but also a superior hunter, protecting the empire.

It is a paradox that the ideological dimension of Darius’ new coins has to be assessed within the context of Iran, while it is extremely difficult to tell what their “practical” significance was in the empire’s heartland, whither they stray only in infinitesimal quantity. We lack archeologically meaningful contextual information that would inform us about local coin consumption patterns. Nevertheless, there are two remarkable sources that shed light on how coins were used beyond their “money” function in Iran, the first on a micro-level, the second on the level of imperial ideology. The first is a well-known clay tablet from the Persepolis Fortification archive (Figure 57.6; PFS 1393s on PF 1495; Root 1989: pp. 36–38; Root 2008: p. 91). It records that Miššabada, a Persian official, transported the “tributes” (*baziš*) of Udana from Barrikana to Susa and crossed the Persepolis administrative district where he was victualled. In lieu of a conventional seal, he applied two type II archer coin impressions to the document. Miššabada again used an archer coin, either a daric or a siglos, to authenticate a similar document when he traveled from Arachosia to Susa (just as another official used an Athenian tetradrachm in the case of PFS 1616s on PF 2053). Though negligible in number, these coins served as fully functional equivalents to regular seals as marks of identification, “performing as image-bearing and image-transmitting agents” (Root 2008: p. 91). In addition to this glimpse of “coins in action,” the Persepolis tablet PF 1495 constitutes a chronological keystone. Since it is dated to the twelfth month of the twenty-second



Figure 57.6 Persepolis Fortification Archive: Tablet PF 1495. Source: Reproduced by permission of the Persepolis Fortification Archive Project (Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago).

regnal year of Darius, i.e. to December 500 or early in 499 BCE, it provides a fixed point by which time the type II archer coin must have been struck, but it dates neither its introduction nor the overall beginning of Darius' new coin series.

The second example of coins in context is often regarded as complementing this chronological evidence (cf. Root 1988). The foundation deposits of the Apadana in Persepolis, discovered in the northeastern and southeastern corners of the main hall in 1933, comprised stone boxes containing silver and gold tablets with the trilingual foundation inscription (DPh). Beneath each coffer, four mint-condition gold croeseids were lodged, together with one griffin tetradrachm from Abdera and one turtle stater from Aegina in the North-East Deposit, and three Cypriot double-sigloi in the South-East Deposit. Neither deposit contained darics or sigloi (Meadows 2003). At first glance, it is reasonable to assume that archer coins would have been part of the deposits if they were already in circulation at that time. Therefore, the Apadana deposits are conventionally considered to be a *terminus post quem* for the inception of the regal series (Robinson 1958: p. 190). However, there is no consensus on the dating of either of the coins in the South-East Deposit, nor of the tablets,

which do not provide a regnal year. Most scholars agree that the deposition of the coins can be narrowed down to between 519/8 and 511 BCE, since the Persian conquest of India is mentioned in DPh while the expedition to Thrace is not. Under close scrutiny, however, even this apparently secure *terminus post quem* for the archer coins not only oscillates between various propositions, 511 BCE being only the last possible date, but may be deceptive due to the rhetorical and ideological dimension of the text (Jacobs 1997: pp. 284–288).

This ideological dimension entails consequences for the interpretation of the entire deposit. In contrast to a hoard, the selection and number of objects included in a deposit are not arbitrary but are the result of conscious choice, the more so as coinage was then a recent “invention” and Mesopotamian and Iranian deposits usually do not contain coins. As Antigoni Zournatzi (2003) and Cindy Nimchuk (2010) have pointed out, the four “frontier” regions that project the expansion of the empire in the foundation text – the region of the Saka beyond Sogdia, Kush/Nubia, Hindush/India, and Sparda/Lydia – were closely associated with gold resources. The materiality of the four gold coins in each deposit may thus evoke the four corners of the world Darius laid claim to, reinforced in the case of Sparda by the very choice of Lydian croeseids. In the same vein, the silver coins in the deposits may have served as symbolic proxies of non-Persian regions that were already conquered or which Darius strove to control (Root 1989: pp. 33–43). If Darius used these coins as symbols of imperial control, the exclusion of darics and sigloi from the deposits, even though they were already in circulation, is not as much in need of an explanation as their presence would be. Against this background, the famous Apadana deposits may not be of chronological value but they are a remarkable example for the significance of coins beyond, and in addition to, their function as money.

The limited evidence for the presence of coins in the heartland of the Achaemenid world reveals little about their local significance on a more general level. This is connected to another issue that remains unsettled. Although there is growing recognition that darics and sigloi served ideological purposes, the question of the audience to whom the imagery of the coins was addressed cannot be answered in a definitive way. Based on the broad evidence in Asia Minor, as well as the rarity of some types, Nimchuk (2002) argued that the earlier series did not primarily serve as money or coins in the economic sense but were tokens or medallions. According to Nimchuk, Darius’ gold coins, in particular, formed part of the Achaemenid system of royal gifting. As precious tokens of the king’s favor, they appealed to Persian nobles in Asia Minor and local non-Persian elites to maintain their loyalty and to spread Darius’ imperial vision and ideology. Given the manifold series of later satraps, governors, and cities in the region, coinage remained a central avenue of governance and medial communication in Lydia and Anatolia as a whole throughout the Persian reign (Dusinberre 2013: p. 72–76). Nimchuk’s

interpretation remains thought-provoking, though hypothetical at the current state of research. Future work will be concerned with finding interpretative models for the function(s) of the darics and sigloi in different parts of the Achaemenid world that consider their ideological significance, without over-emphasizing it at the expense of other functions, as the third case study, mainland Greece, may illustrate.

Greece: From Persepolis to the Parthenon

From the mid-fifth century BCE the Athenian silver tetradrachms increasingly dominated the silver market in the eastern Mediterranean and circulated in Syria, Egypt, Babylonia, and the “Upper Satrapies” where the Achaemenid silver siglos had not gained ground. In the face of this competitor, along with the introduction of the manifold coinages struck by satraps and other officials in Asia Minor, siglos production receded in the early fourth century BCE and finally petered out (cf. Meadows 2011). Limited to Asia Minor, the sigloi gained a wider area of circulation, from the Black Sea region to Egypt, Mesopotamia, the Levant, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, only in conjunction with Greek silver currency, but never had great leverage in mainland Greece (Le Rider 2001: pp. 165–205; Corfù 2010: pp. 170–177). In contrast, the gold darics acquitted themselves successfully as a “world trade currency” (Alram 2012: p. 69) along with the Athenian tetradrachms, as they were the single permanently issued gold coins of “hard” value in the fifth century BCE Mediterranean. It was not until the mid-fourth century BCE that a contender entered the stage with the biga staters of Philip of Macedon, and it is telling that these new series were labeled “Philip’s darics” in an Athenian inscription (IG II² 1526, 22–23). By then, darics, found their way into hoards in Athens, Isthmia, Elis, Eretria, and Thrace and at Mount Athos (Nicolet-Pierre 1996; Corfù 2010: p. 178).

Thanks to the stability of their value, darics were the currency of choice for the transfer of large sums and the accumulation of wealth, as the croeseids had already been to a lesser extent. More than a century after Croesus’ demise, croeseids are listed in the accounts for Phidias’ statue of Athena Parthenos in 440/39 BCE (IG I³ 458, 29–30). Both darics, attested for the first time in 429/8 BCE, and sigloi ended up in the treasuries on the Athenian Acropolis (Kosmetatou 2001) and rank among the holdings of the sanctuaries of Eleusis (I. Eleusis 52, B col. I, 55) and Delphi (but cf. Melville-Jones 1979). At Sparta, some of the “friends of the Lacedaemonians” detailed to fund the Archidamian war also delivered their dues in darics (IG V 1, 1; Loomis 1992). Besides its significance in public accounts and interstate transactions, the daric was a first-rate currency for private savings. The wealthy but metic family of the Athenian orator Lysias, for instance, possessed at least three talents of

silver, 400 Cyzicene electrum staters, 100 darics, and four silver phialae (Lysias 12.11; cf. the wealthy Lydian Pythius in Herodotus 7.27–9). Lysias' finances were far above the ordinary, but the breakdown is significant.

Their presence in hoards, sanctuaries, and individual coin pouches raises the question of how these archer coins moved westward (Miller 1997: pp. 73–74). An earlier generation of scholars assumed that darics and sigloi were issued to finance the numerous Greek mercenaries who served in the troops of satraps and governors in western Asia Minor and later in the Persian king's regular forces (Rop 2019). This view has come under some criticism (cf. Vargyas 2000) as there is evidence that the original payment in darics (Xenophon, *Anabasis* 1.3.21) shifted to a payoff in silver and that Attic coins were increasingly preferred in the fourth century BCE (Alram 1994: pp. 38–39; cf. Tuplin 2014: p. 134). A second line of argument is based on the Persian policy, after Xerxes' disaster, of intervening in Greek affairs by subsidizing various parties and “bribing” politicians, and, conversely, the alacrity with which the Greeks exploited this financial resource in the power play of the Peloponnesian War and the vicissitudinous conflicts of its aftermath (cf. Lewis 1989; for the potential Lydian forerunner of this policy, cf. Günther 2006). A classic example is the story of the Spartan king Agesilaus, who led the Greek alliance against Persia in 396/4 BCE. He made a successful incursion into Lydia, but was ordered back since Sparta was threatened by a coalition of Thebes, Athens, Corinth, and Argos that Artaxerxes II had fomented. According to Plutarch (*Artaxerxes* 20.3–4; *Agesilaus* 15.6), Agesilaus lamented being driven out of Asia by 30 000 “archers.” Due to such references to mercenary pay, bribes, or ransoms in literary sources, the possibility is often overlooked that trade and mercantile connections may have played the greatest part in paving the way for the darics to circulate to Greece.

This focus on Greek recipients has prompted scholars to assume that a specific iconographic trait of the archer coins was “meant to ‘speak’ to the west” (Root 1989: p. 49) and to have been designed with “reference to its impact on the Greeks among whom the coins would circulate” (Alram 1994: p. 38; for the so-called “tiarate heads” that doubtlessly imitate Greek models, see Dusinger 2000 and Dusinger 2013: pp. 72–76). Whereas the isolated type II archer can be traced back to the glyptic repertoire, the dynamic *Knielauf* posture of type III/IV, which we have not discussed so far, is unknown in Iranian iconography. This kneeling-running pose has been seen as having been modeled on contemporary Greek images of the hunting Heracles in order to appeal to western recipients (cf. Tuplin 2014: pp. 143–145; Corfù 2010: pp. 186–191; Stronach 1989: pp. 273–274). Although intriguing, this hypothesis presents two difficulties: firstly, it is at odds with the rule that coins usually sport a design that is pertinent to the issuing authority (cf. Vargyas 2000: pp. 36–38); secondly, albeit not an Iranian pictorial convention, the *Knielauf* schema does not imply that a Greek, or even a specific mythological association, was intended or insinuated. An association with

the kneeling-running Heracles would indeed be highly appropriate for the super-hero-like Great King but is far from the only possible association. Savage “Scythian” archers or satyrs – much less favorable objects of comparison – are rendered in the same posture on late sixth century BCE Athenian vases. As these potential Greek allusions remain somewhat uncertain, we are on firmer ground if we see the *Kniefahrt* posture as a variant of the kneeling archer, visualizing the king’s power converted into speed.

Whether aligned to Greek iconography or not, the Achaemenid coinage was a subject of discourse in Greece. Indirectly, the archer coins may have encouraged the stereotypical contrast between spear-bearing Greek hoplites and Persian archers that is articulated both in Athenian vase painting and in drama, as, for instance, when Aeschylus epitomizes Darius as “the archer-lord of his people” (Persians 556). A glimpse of how Achaemenid coinage figured in discourse is provided by an anecdote in Herodotus (4.166). Aryandes, a satrap of Egypt, allegedly minted high-value silver coins to emulate the regal gold series. Since Darius was eager to install his coins as a unique “monument of himself such as no king ever had accomplished,” he had his insubordinate official executed on a charge of high treason. Much remains enigmatic about this story as no “Aryandics” have survived and no Persian coinage from Egypt is attested before the fourth century BCE (Tuplin 1989; Le Rider 2001: pp. 167–169 ; but cf. van Alfen 2004–2005). It is intriguing, however, that in exposing Darius’ coinage as a memorial strategy, Herodotus uses a phrase that he usually applies to impressive monuments, extraordinary deeds, or remarkable sayings. At the same time, he keeps quiet about the significance of the (actually momentous) darics he was certainly accustomed to, but emphasizes the purity of the (probably fictitious) “Aryandics.” In a number of anecdotes closely associated with the concept of coinage, the *pater historiae* characterizes Darius as a money-grubbing “petty trader” who “drove everything like a shop” (3.89.3) and thus gives Darius’ memorial aspiration a sardonic twist, as Leslie Kurke (1999: pp. 68–89) has observed.

Conclusion

In focusing on the regal series, this chapter has zeroed in on only one aspect of the complex Achaemenid-period monetary system. As the coins that represent the official authority of the kings (but cf. Corfù 2010), darics and sigloi are nonetheless of central importance to the study of the Achaemenid world. Moreover, they provide insights into how the functions and meanings of coins may vary in different cultural frameworks, as examined in three case studies. Leaving aside the intricate debate about the function of early electrum issues (cf. Günther 2006), Lydia, from the days of Croesus to the reign of Darius, appears to have been a coinage-based monetary economy, as does Asia Minor more generally. Within this framework the croeseids and thereafter the

Achaemenid sigloi served as, in Polanyi's terms, "all-purpose money," i.e. as guarantors of value, mediators of economic exchange, and accumulators of wealth. On the Greek mainland, the darics, and to a far lesser extent the sigloi, were used in the main as "special-purpose money" for storing public as well as private high-value savings without affecting day-to-day transactions. In ancient Iran, where coins did not have a stake in economic affairs, the Achaemenid regal coinage excels as means of communication and transcends the economic function of money. As "conveyors of meaning" (Garrison 2010: p. 339) they blend into a broader visual and semantic program that implements themes and notions central to the Achaemenid kingship and its imperial ideology.

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CHAPTER 58

Empire, Borders, and Ideology

Robert Rollinger

Sometime after Cyrus the Great conquered Babylon in 539 BCE he commissioned an official text, designed to legitimize his rule for a Babylonian audience and to present himself as a righteous and just king. This document was thoroughly conceptualized and written down in a Babylonian office or chancery in cuneiform and Babylonian language on clay tablets. We do not know how many copies of this master text were produced, but at least two small fragments, BM 47134 and BM 47176, survived, which have been kept at the British Museum since the end of the nineteenth CE but which were first identified in 2009 and 2010, respectively (Finkel 2013a: pp. 15–23). Some of the master copies were transferred onto clay cylinders, which were used for various purposes. One of these cylinders was buried in the new constructions ordered by Babylon's conqueror. Although the text again and again underscores that Babylon was taken peacefully by Cyrus and his army, and this is confirmed by other cuneiform documents such as the Nabonidus Chronicle (Rollinger 1993: pp. 19–28), at least the city walls may have suffered some damage, which was repaired only three months after the conquest (Tolini 2005; Rollinger 2014d: p. 155). A copy of one of these cylinder inscriptions survived. This is the famous Cyrus Cylinder, which was found in 1879 CE in Babylon and most likely deposited in the foundations of the inner city wall, Imgur-Enlil, whose repair is described in the Cylinder inscription as well (Taylor 2013: pp. 52–59).

The Cyrus Cylinder is the most prominent document of Cyrus' reign and it is an important historical source. Since it provides testimony for how Cyrus

wanted to present himself to a Babylonian audience, it is also a major document for the ideology of early Persian rule and the empire governed by the new elites. It thus perfectly testifies to Cyrus' vision of world rule (Rollinger 2014a, p. 155; Rollinger 2014b: pp. 189–193; van der Spek 2014).

After having described extensively how the reign of the Babylonian king Nabonidus (556–539 BCE) and his crown prince Belshazzar negatively affected the people of Babylonia and the cult of the Babylonian gods, and how this blameful situation enraged Babylon's main deity Marduk, the text continues:

(10) Marduk [...], to all the places, whose dwelling-places were in ruins,
 (11) and to the inhabitants of Sumer and Akkad, who had become like corpses, he turned his mind, he became merciful. He searched through all the countries, examined (them), (12) he sought a just ruler to suit his heart, he took him by the hand: Cyrus, king of Anshan, he called, for dominion over the totality he named his name. (13) Gutium and all the Umman-manda he made subject to him. The black-headed people, whom he allowed his hands to overcome, (14) he protected in justice and righteousness. Marduk, the great lord, who cares for his people, looked with pleasure at his good deeds and his righteous heart.

Lines 10–14, according to Kuhrt 2007: p. 71; further English translations: Finkel 2013a: pp. 4–7; van der Spek 2014: pp. 261–263; for a transliteration of the cuneiform text see Schaudig 2001: pp. 550–554; Finkel 2013b: pp. 129–135; Schaudig 2018, pp. 16–21.

From the third millennium BCE, Babylonians were well aware that a just king is chosen by the head of the Babylonian pantheon to rule the country. But there is also something new with the Cylinder inscription that the text underlines. The new king is chosen by a Babylonian deity, no longer in Babylonia proper, i.e. Sumer and Akkad, but outside, in foreign territory. The new king originates from the east, which is described in antiquated terminology as Gutium and as an area inhabited by “all the Umman-manda,” i.e. the Medes, a designation for the mainly Iranian population of the Zagros mountains and further east (Rossi 2010; 2017). The new ruler is labeled “king of Anshan,” which refers to a territory in southwest Iran where from the second millennium BCE kings of “Elam and Anshan” held power. Already in the time of Cyrus' predecessor Nabonidus, Marduk was regarded to have guided Cyrus. In two of Nabonidus' inscriptions, it is recorded that Marduk had elected Cyrus to overcome Ištumeḡu/Astyages, king of the Medes (Schaudig 2001: pp. 416–417; Ehulhul-Cylinder i 15–29; 473: Harrān-Cylinder i' 7'–17; cf. Rollinger 2010: pp. 78–79). Thus, seen through a Babylonian lens, the Babylonian god was held responsible for Cyrus' ascent. In this way, his early success was acclaimed as a Babylonian success, which may have been a reply to the gradually growing feeling of endangerment aroused by the permanently ascending power in the east. The following passage in the Cyrus Cylinder can be

understood as a direct answer to these fears as well as a re-interpretation of Nabonidus' propaganda, to paraphrase: don't be afraid Babylonians, Marduk has not only chosen Cyrus to be king of the east but also of Babylonia proper, and, as we will soon see, even as king of the world. He did so because Nabonidus was a bad king and Cyrus is a just one. As a proof of the crucial message paraphrased above, the inscription immediately underscores the "fact" that the city of Babylon was taken by Cyrus without any fighting or strife:

(15) He (Marduk) ordered him (Cyrus) to go to Babylon, and let him take the road to Babylon. Like a friend and companion he went by his side. (16) His massive troops, whose number was immeasurable like the water of a river, marched with their arms at their side. (17) Without battle and fighting he let him enter his city Babylon. He saved Babylon from its oppression. Nabonidus, the king who did not honour him, he handed over to him. (18) All the inhabitants of Babylon, the whole of the land of Sumer and Akkad, princes and governors knelt before him, kissed his feet, rejoiced at his kingship; their faces shone. (19) "The lord, who through his help has brought the dead to life, who in (a time of) disaster and oppression has benefited all" – thus they joyfully celebrated him, honoured his name.

According to Kuhrt 2007: p. 71.

From other sources such as the Nabonidus Chronicle we know that there was some serious and heavy fighting at Opis, before Cyrus' troops could enter Babylon peacefully (Grayson 2000: p. 109, lines iii 12–15). The Cyrus Cylinder, however, conceals these events in order to enhance the implications of Marduk's divine benevolence toward Cyrus. And there is another point that deserves attention: Cyrus, the king from the east, has just become king of Sumer and Akkad, i.e. Babylonia. At line 20, the text changes perspective and this is discernible in the accompanying shift from third to first person, which led Irving Finkel to dub the following lines, 20–36, "the Cyrus proclamation" (Finkel 2013a: pp. 23–24):

(20) I, Cyrus, king of the universe, mighty king, king of Babylon, king of Sumer and Akkad, king of the four quarters, (21) son of Cambyses, great king, king of Anshan, grandson of Cyrus, great king, king of Anshan, descendant of Teispes, great king, king of Anshan, (22) eternal seed of kingship, whose reign was loved by Bel and Nabu and whose kingship they wanted to please their hearts – when I had entered Babylon peacefully, (23) I set up, with acclamation and rejoicing, the seat of lordship in the palace. Marduk, the great lord, ʾbestʾowed ʾon meʾ as des[t]iny his great heart, which lovʾesʾ Babylon, daily I cared for his worship. (24) My numerous troops marched peacefully through Babylon. I did not allow any troublemaker to arise in the whole land of Sumer and Akkad.

According to Kuhrt 2007: p. 71 complemented by the new readings of Finkel 2013b: p. 131.

Apart from the firm emphasis on the peaceful conquest of Babylon, genealogy is introduced as a basic element of the king's self-representation. Tripartite or even longer genealogies have repeatedly been important features of Mesopotamian royal representation, although this was not the case with Cyrus' Neo-Babylonian predecessors. Nabopolassar claimed to be the "son of a nobody" and Nabonidus could not refer to a royal lineage at all. By contrast, Cyrus is son, grandson, and descendant of "great kings," who nonetheless by their proper names and the reference to Anshan reveal their foreign background. Interestingly, in this part of the inscription, Cyrus himself is not characterized as king of Anshan as before in line 12 but with much more far-reaching royal titles. Now, he is not only king of Babylon and king of Sumer and Akkad but also "king of the universe" and "king of the four quarters." Thus, beyond Babylonia and the east, suddenly a third spatial dimension arises that hints at the claim for world dominion. Both the genealogical and the spatial arguments for royal legitimation are crucial elements of Cyrus' self-representation. They are embedded within Mesopotamian tradition, although Nabonidus and his immediate predecessors did not (or could not) develop the argument of a royal lineage.

The claim of world dominion and royal genealogy are traditional strategies to legitimize rule and in order to understand the specifics of each strategy of royal self-representation, it is crucial to explore the basic elements of both. Let us start with genealogy. Cyrus mentions his father and grandfather as well as an ancestor. Notably, this ancestor is not Achaemenes, whom Darius I later claims to be his ancestor. It cannot be ruled out that Darius I and Cyrus, and thus their "families," may have been somehow related, as in the case of the House of Valois, which was a cadet branch of the Capetian dynasty and, like nearly all European dynasties of the Middle Ages and the Modern era, were somehow related. Nevertheless, descent and ancestry, and thus dynasty, are fundamentally social constructions of self-representation that are not established by a relationship based on DNA but are rather constructed by focusing on specific branches of origin, real or forged. In his "proclamation" Cyrus presents himself as the descendant of Teispes (not Achaemenes).¹ In this regard, Cyrus is consistent with Mesopotamian tradition, where it was common to refer to an ancestor by his proper name. In comparison, Darius I is exceptional because he introduces both a new ancestor, Achaemenes, and the family name "Achaemenids," although his genealogy does include a Teispes who may or may not be identical with Cyrus' predecessor (Rollinger 1999).

All these Teispid predecessors are introduced as kings of Anshan and here the spatial dimension mentioned above comes into play. As we know, space is also a mental construction that is organized not only from specific viewpoints but also according to certain principles of structuring, thus establishing a mental map (Nicolet 1991). This crucial aspect is sometimes ignored because

ancient constructions of space are usually transferred to modern maps and thus “objectified”; and of course we tend to ignore that our modern maps are constructions of space as well.

As already mentioned, Anshan is a territory in southwest Iran. It is a common feature of the Cyrus Cylinder to use antiquated geographical terminology such as Sumer and Akkad, Anshan, Gutium. It is nevertheless astonishing, at least from a modern viewpoint, that the term “Parsa,” i.e. Fars, does not occur at all. Apparently, Cyrus’ self-perception is not a “Persian” or “Iranian” but an “Anshanite” one. Against this backdrop, it is interesting to note that the etymological background of the names Cyrus, Cambyses, and Teispes is disputed in modern scholarship (Schmitt 2011: pp. 208–211, 219–227, 369–371).

Whereas Anshan, Sumer, and Akkad, as well as Babylon, refer to regions and a city that are more or less geographically fixed, the terms “king of the universe” and “king of the four quarters” are much more common and sweeping designations that generally refer to the world as a whole. These terms originate from Mesopotamian tradition reaching back as far as the third millennium BCE and became especially common when empires started to flourish in the first millennium BCE (Seux 1967). The claim for world dominion is also a construction, which is characteristic for empires (Gehler and Rollinger 2014). In the same inscription, some lines below, this claim is refined. It reveals how Cyrus (and his courtiers) conceptualized the newly conquered empire and its “borders,” i.e. its reach and dimensions:

(27) Me, Cyrus, the king, who worships him (Marduk), and Cambyses, my very own son, as well as all my troops (28) he (Marduk) blessed mercifully. In well-being we [walk] happily before him. [At his] great [command] all the kings, who sit on thrones, (29) from all parts of the world, from the Upper Sea to the Lower Sea, who dwell [in distant regions], all the kings of Amurru, who dwell in tents, (30) brought their heavy tribute to me and kissed my feet in Babylon. According to Kuhrt 2007: pp. 71–72.

The passage starts with Marduk’s blessing for Cyrus, his heir apparent, as well as for his troops. With the introduction of Cyrus’ son Cambyses, who is later installed as king of Babylon, the text launches a progressive perspective of establishing a new dynasty – just as the genealogy discussed above presented a retrograde perspective of legitimization. With Cyrus and his son, world dominion comes into play and this conception is now presented in a more elaborated way. Again, the “world” is encapsulated by terminology that is deeply rooted in Mesopotamian tradition. The Upper Sea, i.e. the Mediterranean, and the Lower Sea, i.e. the Persian Gulf, have been conceptualized as borders of the world since the kings of Agade of the third millennium

BCE (Yamada 2005). However, the inscription develops this concept in more detail. Cyrus's sovereignty encompasses "all the kings, who sit on thrones, from all parts of the world" and "all the kings of Amurru, who dwell in tents." As a visible sign of their submission they are supposed to yield heavy tribute to Cyrus and kiss his feet. Immediately a Babylon-centric worldview becomes apparent, for Cyrus does not reside in Anshan or somewhere else but in Babylon. There are many examples of Neo-Babylonian inscriptions, especially of Nebuchadnezzar II, where the Babylonian king residing in Babylon receives tribute "from the Upper Sea to the Lower Sea, all the lands" (cf. e.g. EŞ 7834 v* 21–27 Da Riva 2013: p. 211; for further examples see Rollinger 2016a p. 147 n. 82). This Babylonian perspective becomes even more evident by the fact that in the Cylinder's worldview, the "east" is eclipsed, whereas the "west" figures prominently with the "all the kings of Amurru, who dwell in tents." With Amurru the text once more uses an age-old expression for the west imbued by the topical view that all people to the west of the river Euphrates practice a nomadic lifestyle. Taken together, all the kings of the world – the civilized ones ("all the kings, who sit on thrones") and the uncivilized ones ("all the kings of Amurru") – acknowledge the world dominion of the king of Anshan residing in Babylon.

When Darius I became king of the empire in 521/520 BCE, conceptions of kingship and its representations changed remarkably (Briant 1996: pp. 117–173). The king established a new dynasty and demonstrated a preference for new residences. In Naqš-e Rostam, a new royal necropolis was established and new campaigns were launched to expand the borders of the empire. With Xerxes' reign, expansion suddenly came to a halt, but the empire continued more or less successfully in the area from the river Indus to the Aegean until Alexander III brought it to an end. These developments affected the official view of the empire, royal representation, and spatial conceptions. Legitimization through genealogy was as important for Darius I as it was for his successors, who all presented themselves as "Achaemenids," whereas Darius also stressed his Aryan and Persian descent (Rollinger 2014a, p. 202; Rollinger 2014b: pp. 156–159). Already in the Bisitun inscription, a further new element was introduced that figured prominently in the inscriptions of Darius I and Xerxes I: lists of the peoples/countries (*dahyu-*, pl. *dahyāva*) that illustrate the dimensions of the Achaemenid empire (Hachmann 1995; Jacobs 1994; Dan 2013; Jacobs 2017). The peoples/countries in these lists are not always the same and the sequence of their presentation may also differ. As a common feature, the lists are introduced with a standard formula that hints to the legitimacy of the king's rule who is guided by Auramazda, as an inscription of Darius I from Persepolis illustrates:

By the favour of Auramazda, these (are) the countries of which I took possession together with these "Persian" people; these feared me (and) brought me tribute: Elam, Media, Babylonia, Arabia, Assyria, Egypt, Armenia, Cappadocia,

Lydia (Sardis), ‘Greeks’ (Yaunā) of the mainland and (those) by the sea, and the countries beyond the sea, Sagartia, Parthia, Drangiana, Areia, Bactria, Sogdiana, Chorasmia, Sattagydia, Arachosia, India, Gandara, Scythians (Sakā), Maka

DPe § 2, according to Kuhrt 2007: p. 486.

What these lists present, together with the royal inscriptions of which they are a part, is a mythical worldview. In this regard, it is significant that they do not talk about (regular) taxes but about “tribute” (*bāji-*) (Schmitt 2014: p. 162). There are also no governors, administrators, or the like but “vassals” (*bandakā-*) (Schmitt 2014: p. 151), by whom the Great King rules his empire and to whom they owe obedience (Rollinger 2017). Thus the lists do not appear to represent “provinces” but countries/people that visualize the Persian-Achaemenid Empire and its place in the universe (Dan 2013; Rollinger/Degen 2020). In this mental map, the “Persian land,” i.e. Parsa/Fars, constitutes the center of the empire, immediately followed by neighboring lands such as Media, Babylonia, and Elam. Parsa is introduced as a country that does not have to pay tribute at all, whereas Media, Babylonia, and Elam often begin the lists. The important royal residences are also located in these countries from which the bulk of royal inscriptions originates. In one of these inscriptions, the so-called “Susa foundation charter” (DSf), Darius I reports how his palace in Susa was built (for the text see Kuhrt 2007: pp. 492–495). What is special about this text is the fact that supposedly all peoples of the empire somehow participate in the construction work and make their specific skills available for the royal building. In an analogous manner the construction materials are also yielded from all parts of the empire. In this way, the royal residence at the center of the empire becomes an image of the empire in its totality that is conceptualized as the world (Rollinger 2006a: p. 204). It is therefore not surprising that the Achaemenid royal inscriptions do not indicate the presence of a world outside the empire and beyond the Great King’s reach.

The central position of Parsa, and the adjacent countries of Elam, Media, and Babylonia, becomes apparent in inscriptions that focus on the “borders” of the empire. These borders are not fixed frontier lines like those of modern states but rather regions, where the empire and the world appear to end. A good example of this conception is DPh, four copies of which have survived. They represent trilingual texts, two on gold tablets, two on silver tablets, that were part of deposits of the *apadana* at Persepolis, i.e. the magnificent reception hall, where the Great King used to receive delegations from all over his empire:

This (is) the kingdom which I behold, from the Saca who are beyond Sogdiana, from there as far as Kush, from the Indus as far as Sardis, which Auramazda, the greatest of the gods, bestowed upon me.

DPh § 2 according to Kuhrt 2007: p. 476.

As Amélie Kuhrt put it, the mental map of this text exhibits the king looking out from the center toward the edges of the empire: “In words, he draws lines, running north-east to south-west, southeast to northwest, which intersect the imperial core” (Kuhrt 2007: p. 469; cf. also Kuhrt 2002). Thus, according to this inscription, the border areas of the Persian-Achaemenid Empire are the lands of the Sakā, i.e. Scythians² in the north(east), Kush, i.e. Ethiopia/Nubia in the south(west), India in the (south)east, and finally Sardis, i.e. Lydia in the (north)west. As we will see below, this border conception was not a stable one in Persian-Achaemenid history. There were also other countries/peoples that could figure prominently at the outer and inner frontiers of the empire.

The enumeration of lands/peoples was not limited to the lists in Darius’ and Xerxes’ inscriptions. They also occur, in another form, on monuments, where each land/people was represented by a male figure with specific dress and, in some cases, weaponry and gifts. Some of these were added with labels in Old Persian, Babylonian, and Elamite (and even Egyptian), which are important for the identification of each land/people. This is the case for Darius’ tomb at Naqš-i Rostam and its perfect copy, the tomb of Artaxerxes III at Persepolis (Schmitt 2009). Darius’ tomb depicts 28 representatives of the different lands/peoples raising a throne platform, on which Darius stands in front of a fire altar in a gesture of prayer toward Auramazda. Two more representatives are giving further assistance by holding the feet of the platform from outside (Walser 1966: pp. 51–58; cf. Kuhrt 2007: p. 500; Calmeyer 2009; Rollinger 2006b). It appears that all the peoples of the empire are carrying the Great King on their hands and that the king pays reverence to Auramazda for the grace to which he owes his world-dominating kingship. All the other royal tombs at Naqš-i Rostam and Persepolis share this representation, although they lack the accompanying labels. In an abbreviated form, these throne-bearers also appear at the doorjambs of the southern gates of the Palace of the 100 Columns and the Central Building at Persepolis (Walser 1966: pp. 58–67). The most prominent depiction of this kind is the depiction of the 23 delegations of the different peoples/lands exhibited at the northern and eastern façades of the *apadana* in Persepolis. In a symbolic way, they are yielding their lands’ characteristic products as “tribute”/“gift” to the king represented in two grand reliefs sitting on his throne and surrounded by his courtiers. For unknown reasons, the two reliefs with the king were exchanged by one of Darius’ successors, but the delegations are still in their original location, flanking the staircases leading up to the great reception hall offering their land’s share to the Great King. A special case is illustrated by the depictions of the peoples/countries on monuments originating from Egypt with additional labels in Egyptian hieroglyphs. The most prominent ones are those on the statue of Darius I, which is of Egyptian origin but which was found at Susa. Other examples survived on the Tell el-Maskhouta canal stela that

commemorates the course of the artificial canal commissioned by Darius connecting the river Nile with the Red Sea (Yoyotte 2010: pp. 288–296; Rollinger 2012a: pp. 3–9 n. 109).

As already mentioned, the mental map was not a stable one but changed and was adapted over time. Whereas India (Hinduś) in the east and the land to the south of Egypt, i.e. Ethiopia/Nubia (Kūšā), remained stable border markers, other coordinates of the imperial coordinate system were exchanged and adapted. Thus, for the land to the west of Egypt, the term Putāyā, which we may translate as “Libya,” was introduced, which was already in use during Neo-Babylonian times (Schmitt 2014: p. 235). Changes are also visible at the eastern and western fringes of the empire. In both areas, differentiations of originally broader terms took place. This is best explained by the fact that a better knowledge of these regions led to the need and desire for specification. Notably, all these terms reveal a “Persian” and thus etic view on the edges of their empire.

Let us start with the east. The term Sakā (Old Persian)³ was differentiated in “*Sakā haumavargā*,” “*Sakā tigraxaudā*,” and “*Sakā tayaiy paradraya*.” The appositions specify the Scythians according to customs, dress, and region; “*haumavarga-*” means “*hauma* preparing” (Schmitt 2014: pp. 191–192) and refers to the consumption/preparation of a plant/drink with intoxicating effect (Schmitt 2004); “*tigraxauda-*” means “(wearing) the pointed cap” (Schmitt 2014: p. 255), a defeated representative of these Sakā is depicted on the relief of Bisitun with the chief Skunkha (Wiesehöfer 2009–2011; Rollinger/Degen 2020). The description of the “*Sakā tayaiy paradraya*,” the Scythians “beyond the sea” (Schmitt 2014: pp. 224–226), is especially interesting in this context. It has always been a serious problem to identify the “sea” as encapsulated in this idea. The solution for this lies in the fact that these terms actually do not refer to “real” geography according to modern terms but to mental maps and perceptions of the world belonging to the Achaemenid imperial agenda, which is in dialogue with Ancient Near Eastern tradition. This becomes immediately evident when we look at the western fringes of the empire, where we encounter a similar conception. There it is not the Lydians, who mainly figure as “frontier people,” but rather the Yaunā (Old Persian), Yaunap (Elamite), or Yamnāya (Babylonian), which are all terms that can be translated as “Greeks” (Rollinger and Henkelman 2009).⁴ These Yaunā are differentiated in “*Yaunā takabarā*,” i.e. “Greeks” *takabarā*” (Rollinger 2006b), “*Yaunā tayaiy uškahyā*,” i.e. “Greeks” of the mainland,” “(*Yaunā*) *tayaiy drayahyā (dārayanti)*,” i.e. “(‘Greeks’) who (dwell) by the sea,” and “*Yaunā tayaiy para draya (dārayanti)*,” i.e. “‘Greeks’ who (dwell) beyond the sea” (Rollinger 2006a, 2013).⁵ In analogy to the Scythians, the Yaunā are specified by referring to regions and outward appearances (*takabarā*). Apparently both peoples, Yaunā and Sakā, represent archetypical frontier people arranged in opposite directions within the Achaemenid mental map

(cf. Lanfranchi 2009–2011: p. 582). This fact is also underscored by the evidence originating from the rich corpus of Achaemenid seals, first appearing in the second half of Darius' reign and attested throughout the fifth and fourth centuries BCE. There, apart from the Egyptians, only the Greeks and Scythians appear as identifiable peoples (Wu 2014; Rollinger 2016b, 35f with n. 111; Tuplin 2020, pp. 336f., 339, 347–359 with n. 45, 372–379).⁶ Based on the evidence of the royal inscriptions, these peoples are part of the empire ruled by the Great King according to the principles of a “*pax Achaemenidica*,” acting as “king of countries containing all kinds of men,” “king on this (great) earth (far and wide),” or “king on the entire earth” (for references see Rollinger 2017). On the seals, however, these peoples are permanently overthrown by the Great King. The seemingly contradictory nature of these two kinds of representation reveals the multiple and mixed functions of the Achaemenid mental map as it does not represent reality but conveys an ideologically based worldview. On the one hand, the Achaemenid empire represents the world and is perceived through the lens of a “Persian”-centric perception of the world. On the other hand, the elites from whom the seals originate were eager to demonstrate their bravery and heroism in battle and strife to the Great King, and performed heroic deeds in a paradigmatic fashion at the fringes of the empire.

But what does the designation “beyond the sea” as reference of the localization of specific Yaunā and Sakā mean in this context? In attempting to answer this question, ideology and world perception interfere with real geography. Focusing on the Yaunā only, one could argue that the “Yaunā beyond the sea” represent those people of the Aegean or Sea of Marmara that were, at least for some time, part of the empire, and that this designation thus reflects real geography. But this is not really convincing, as the difficulties that modern scholarship has with precisely identifying these different Yaunā exhibit. The positioning of these peoples in the inscriptions is too vague for exact localization. What matters is the meaning of the phrase “beyond the sea.” And this can be decoded only if we interpret its terminology in dialogue with Ancient Near Eastern traditions.

As we have already seen, since the third millennium BCE, the imperial agenda of Ancient Near Eastern empires claimed world dominion from the Upper to the Lower Sea, i.e. the sea was the border of the world and thus the border of the empire. With the empire of Agade, there was already an expansion of this concept, when king Maništūsu (2275–2261 BCE) claimed to have been victorious over “the cities across the sea” (Frayne 1993: p. 1.3.1, lines 13–15; cf. Rollinger 2013: pp. 96–97). The kings of Agade played a prominent role all over Ancient Near Eastern history as archetypical empire builders, and this is especially true for the empires of the first millennium BCE, including the Persian one (cf. Rollinger 2012b, 2013, 2016b). It was in particular in the first millennium BCE that empires were keen to demonstrate their individual

achievements by claiming to have transgressed the borders of the sea. From the times of Sargon II (721–705 BCE) onward, this was demonstrated, in particular, by referring to islands or regions “in the midst of the sea” that were supposedly under the Assyrian king’s control (Rollinger 2013). This is also true for the Neo-Babylonian and Persian kings (Rollinger 2016a). Darius I took up this concept and developed it further to demonstrate how outstanding his world dominion was, and this is precisely what the *paradraya* terminology refers to. In contrast to their Neo-Babylonian and Neo-Assyrian predecessors, the Persian kings do not only claim to have controlled regions “beyond the sea” in the west but also in the east. Only with this information in mind does the following passage in Darius’ Bisitun inscription, which has long puzzled modern scholars (who were trying to harmonize the text’s information with “real geography”), make sense:

Afterwards, I went off with an army against Scythia (Saka); after that, the Saka who wear pointed hat came against me. When I had reached the sea, [by means of a tree-trunk?] with the whole army I crossed it. Afterwards I defeated the Saka utterly; another part I took captive, which was led to me in fetters. And (he) who was their chief, called Skunkha – him they took prisoner, led to me in fetters. There I made another their chief, as was my desire. After that, the country became mine.

DB §74 according to Kuhrt 2007: pp. 149–151.

The suggested restoration “by means of a tree-trunk” in a damaged passage of the text, makes sense if one ignores that text’s major statement, i.e. that Darius and his army crossed the sea (Old Persian: *draya*), and interprets this sea as “river” identifying it with the Amu Darya. However, we are again dealing with a mental map, where world perception and claim of world dominion are the parameters for interpretation. In this light, the message of the inscription is clear and simple: Darius I is the first king in history who really ruled the world by controlling, in east and west, areas beyond the sea that were out of reach of any of his predecessors (Rollinger 2014a: pp. 198–199; Rollinger/Degen 2020). This claim also becomes evident in another of Darius’ inscriptions that is preserved in a Babylonian version only. In this inscription, Auramazda bestows on Darius “the king kingship over this wide earth, in which there are many lands: Parsa, Media and the other lands of other tongues, of mountains and plains, from this side of the sea to that side of the sea, from this side of the desert to that side of the desert” (DPg according to Kuhrt 2007: p. 483; Delshad 2019). Like his Neo-Babylonian and Neo-Assyrian predecessors, Darius ruled over all conceivable landscapes, including deserts and mountains (cf. Dan 2013; Rollinger 2014c, 2016a). But this time, the absolute fringes of the world have been reached. This included the Yaunā as well as the Sakā “beyond the sea.” Persian rule was outstanding and the Persian Empire could not be compared with any preceding empire.

NOTES

- 1 This is the main reason why Cyrus and his family should be labeled Teispids (and not Achaemenids), although the family name “Teispids” is a modern neologism and is never used by Cyrus himself.
- 2 According to Herodotus 7.64.2, “the Persians call all Scythians Sákas.”
- 3 Sakka (Elamite) and Gimirru, i.e. “Cimmerians” (Babylonian).
- 4 The translation “Ionian” is misleading.
- 5 Moreover, there are anonymous “*dahyāva tayaīy para draya*,” i.e. “(countries/peoples) which (are) beyond the sea,” “*tayaīy drayahyā*,” i.e. “(people) who (dwell) by the sea,” and, attested in Babylonian only, “*matāta ša ina* ^{ID2}*marratu*,” i.e. “countries which (are) by the sea.”
- 6 In contrast, the archives show a much more detailed picture reflecting “reality”: cf. e.g. Henkelman and Stolper 2009.

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FURTHER READING

Rollinger (2012b, 2013, 2014c, 2016a, 2020), Dan 2013, and Rollinger/Degen 2020 present good overviews on how Ancient Near Eastern empires, including the Achaemenid Persian Empire, conceptualized their worlds. Gehler and Rollinger (2014, 2020) and Rollinger, Degen, and Gehler (2020) offer a general introduction on how empires are structured and how their ideologies are developed. On mental maps in general and in relation to the Roman Empire specifically, see Nicolet (1991).

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This edition first published 2021
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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data applied for

Hardback: 9781119174288

Cover design: Wiley

Cover image: An ancient sculpture of Achaemenid Empire, Bisotun (Province of Kermānshāh, Iran), Relief of Darius I: Auramazdā (Photo B. Jacobs)

Set in 11/13.5pt Galliard by Straive, Pondicherry, India

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SECTION VI

ADMINISTRATION AND ECONOMY

SECTION VI.A

IMPERIAL ADMINISTRATION

CHAPTER 59

Satrapal Administration

Bruno Jacobs

The Term *Satrap* in Achaemenid Royal Inscriptions

In Achaemenid royal inscriptions the term *xšaça-pā-van-* figures twice in the Old Persian version of the Bisotun inscription, where it refers to the governors of Bactria and Arachosia, Dādaršiš und Vivāna (DB §§ 38 and 45). A corresponding abstract **xšaça-pā-vana-* is not attested in the primary sources. The Old Iranian compound nouns **xšaθra-pā-van-* and **xšaθra-pā(-na)-* yield derivative formations in numerous languages (Schmitt 1976: pp. 388–389), for example σατράπης with its variations in Greek (Schmitt 1976: pp. 379–380; cf. Blümel 1988: p. 7) or *alḫšadrapanu* and variations in Akkadian (Schmitt 1976: pp. 374–375).

The Meaning of the Terms *Satrap* and *Satrapy*

In the word *xšaça-pā-van-* the noun *xšaça-* is combined with *pā* (“protect”) and the suffix *-van-*. Depending on whether one prefers the territorial meaning “empire” or the abstract meaning “sovereignty” for the component */xšaça-/*, *xšaça-pā-van-* is to be understood as “protector of empire” or “protector of sovereignty” (Bartholomae 1904: pp. 542–543; Schmitt 1976: p. 373; Khatchadourian 2016: pp. 3–4).

The fact that the word is attested only twice in the preserved corpus of Old Persian texts might lead one to think that, as an administrative term, it had a very precise meaning, i.e. that it was applied only to a particular position within the administrative hierarchy. But frequent use of the Greek equivalent in reference to persons of clearly diverging positions (see below) seems to suggest a more general meaning such as “governor.” Since, for example, Mania had to obtain the approval of Pharnabazus, the satrap of Hellespontine Phrygia, to administer (σατραπεύειν) the satrapy of Aeolis as successor to her husband Zenis (Xen., Hell. 3.1.10–12), we are clearly dealing with a position that is inferior to other satrapal ranks; and that Mania as a satrap could not compete with officials like prince Cyrus (Xen., Anab. 1.1.2; Plut., Artax. 2.3), Tissaphernes (Xen., Hell. 3.1.3), or Bessus (Arr., Anab. 3.8.3), who are likewise called *satraps*, is obvious, if one considers the size of Aeolis as compared with the areas of responsibility of those persons. The same goes for the 120 satraps named in Daniel 6.2 (aram. ^a*ḥašdarpaṇayyā*) or the satraps (hebr. ^a*ḥašdarpaṇīm*), governors, and leaders of the 127 provinces in Esther 8.9: Here, too, we can hardly presume a very precise use of the term.

One might wonder whether this is a phenomenon peculiar to literary sources: perhaps literary authors were prone to use the term *satrap* in an imprecise way which made the meaning shift from particular to general. But Lycian and Greek inscriptions attest a comparable application of *satrap* to officials of diverging rank. In an inscription on the Payawa sarcophagus from Xanthos, for example, *Wat[aprd]ata* (Autophradates), the governor of Lydia, is called *χssadrapa pa[rz]a* (TAM I: 40–III). Autophradates’ responsibility for Lycia, an area always closely connected to Caria, indicates that Caria was also subordinate to the Lydian satrap (Jacobs 2003a: pp. 316–322; Jacobs 2019: pp. 47–54). But the Lycian version of the Xanthos stele says that Pixodarus, a member of the Carian dynasty, *χssaθrapawate* – “was satrap” (Dupont-Sommer 1979: p. 136, 4f; Schmitt 1976: pp. 378–379). A similar label was applied to Pixodarus’ dynastic predecessors, Maussollos and Idrieus, in the case of the former in inscriptions from Mylasa (Syll.³ 167, 1 f. 19. 32 f.; Le Bas and Waddington 1870: pp. 377–379) and neighboring Sekköy (Blümel 1990: p. 30), in the case of the latter in a Roman-period copy of an inscription from Tralleis (Syll.² 573, 4 f.). So the title *satrap* was evidently applied to officials of various rank within the administrative hierarchy; its semantic range corresponds to the English word “governor” (cf. Jacobs 2003a: pp. 323–327), and the way in which it is used by Greek and Latin historians is not after all a distortion. In addition, the cases of the local dynasties in Caria and Aeolis make clear that the position of satrap was by no means reserved for Iranians; an inscription from Hemite seems to prove that this was also true in Cilicia (Lemaire 1991: p. 205). As a result, a satrap can be defined as the highest official of a particular administrative area, irrespective of its hierarchical level.

The Sources

Sources for an Empire-Wide Administration

In the past historians have generally drawn on three (groups of) sources to describe the satrapal administration: 1) the list of satrapies in Herodotus 3.89–3.94; 2) the lists of countries in Achaemenid royal inscriptions; 3) the lists of satrapies given by the Alexander historians.

- 1) Herodotus' list has been an object of controversy for more than 100 years (cf. the summaries of previous research by Jacobs 1994: pp. 9–29; Jacobs 2003a). In Hist. 3.89 Herodotus claims that Darius (i) established (κατεστήσατο) the satrapies and appointed governors for them, and (ii) fixed taxes for the provinces – prior to this only presents were given. Herodotus unmistakably links taxation with the establishment of satrapies. This has often been turned into a “tax reform” initiated by Darius. But that is not what Herodotus says and since there are no reports of a tax reform independent of Herodotus (Jacobs 2003a: pp. 307–311, esp. n. 59), the supposed reform can be removed from the history books. Moreover, Armayor has convincingly characterized Herodotus' *nomoi*-catalogue as an intrusion from another literary genre, viz. epic (Armayor 1978; cf. Ruffing 2009 for another explanation). Its historical value is, therefore, comparable to that of the catalogue of ships in the Iliad (Hom, Il. 2.493–759).
- 2) The lists of countries in Achaemenid royal inscriptions (DB §6; DNa §3; DPe §2; DSaa §4; DSe §3; DSm §2; DSv §2; XPh §3; Schmitt 1991: p. 48; Lecoq 1997: passim; Schmitt 2000: pp. 29–30, 61, 91–93; Vallat 2010: pp. 303, 311; Yoyotte 2010: pp. 289–296) and in the fortress rings on the base of the statue of Darius from Susa (Figures 59.1 and 59.2) and on the stelae from the Suez Canal (Yoyotte 2010; *here* Figure 20.1) are, of course, primary sources, but they have found it hard to stake a successful claim as evidence for the administrative system. There are two reasons for this: on the one hand, the *dahyāva*-catalogues were, by analogy with Herodotus 3.89–94, understood as lists of peoples (see Jacobs 2003a: p. 303), and on the other hand, the items in the lists are not labeled *satrapies* but *countries* – which conflicts with the presupposition that the Achaemenid Empire's administrative units were called *satrapies*. By contrast with such views, Schmitt postulated that *dahyu*- “country” was the prevalent Old Persian term (“die altpersische Sprachregelung”) for the empire's provinces (Schmitt 1976: p. 373) and demonstrated elsewhere that the word designated territorial units (Schmitt 1999: pp. 443–452). It is exactly those units of which both Darius and Xerxes say that they paid

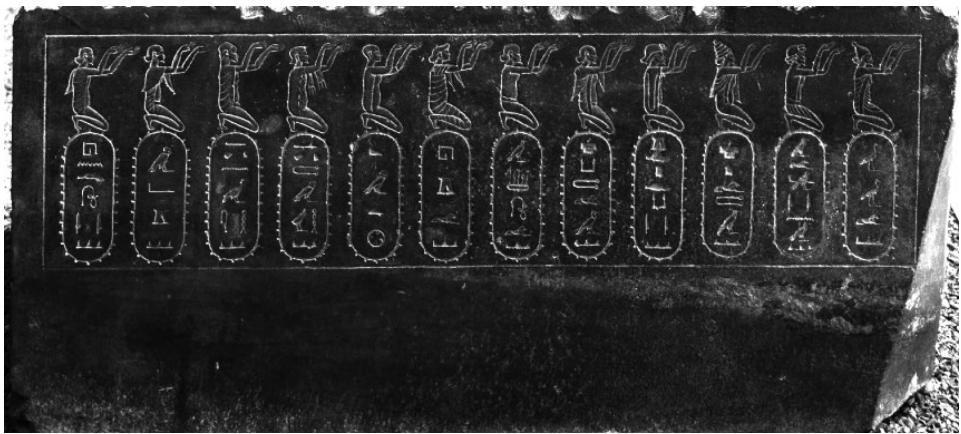


Figure 59.1 Teheran, National Museum: Statue of Darius I from Susa, Province representations on the right side of the statue base. Photo B. Jacobs DSC_9314; reproduced by permission of National Museum of Iran.



Figure 59.2 Teheran, National Museum: Statue of Darius I from Susa, Province representations on the left side of the statue base. Photo B. Jacobs DSC_9315; reproduced by permission of National Museum of Iran.

them levies (DB §7; DPe §2; DNa §3; DSe §3; XPh §3); so in a key function they accord exactly with what, following the terminology of the Greek sources, should be called a *satrapy*.

The conspicuous increase in the number of items in the lists has often been adduced as a reason to reject this argument. Darius speaks of just 23 countries in the Bisotun inscription (DB §6), but on his tomb (DNa §3) and in the only list of Xerxes (XPh §3) we find 30. Since this increase in number did not correspond to actual territorial gains during the period in question,

the lists were denied value as concrete historical testimony. Moreover, since supposedly indispensable provinces such as Hellespontine Phrygia or Cilicia were absent, the lists were described as incomplete and dismissed as statements of merely symbolic or ideological value (cf. the overview in Jacobs 2003a: esp. pp. 303–314). It is, however, possible to demonstrate that the set of items named in the lists is by no means accidental. On the contrary – with a few explicable exceptions – it very largely accords with the toponyms named in the Q-texts of the Persepolis Fortification Archive as destinations or starting points of travelers, and with the ethnonyms used in the archive as a whole to label individuals and groups in terms of the administrative unit from which they came (Jacobs 2017; cf. Henkelman and Stolper 2009: pp. 300–306; Briant 2010: pp. 34–43). There were many ways in which the existing lists could have been extended to make them more impressive (see e.g. the reference to Hellespontine Phrygia and Cilicia above), so the fact that the names chosen match the pool provided by the Persepolis Fortification Archive is sufficiently clear evidence that the increase in the number of listed countries reflects an administrative rationale and that the *dahyāva*-catalogues are lists of imperial provinces (Figure 59.3¹).

- 3) The Alexander historians provide registers of the satrapies distributed to Macedonian governors after Alexander's death (Jacobs 1994: pp. 39–51) at Babylon (Arr., Succ. 5–6 = Phot., Bibl. 92.69a–b; Curt. 10.10.1–4; Dexippos apud Phot., Bibl. 82.64 a–b; Diod. 18.3.1–3; Pomp. Trogus apud Just. 13.4.10–24; Orosius, Hist. 3.23.7–13), Triparadisus (Arr., Succ. 34–37 = Phot., Bibl. 92.71b; Diod. 18.39.5–7), and Persepolis (Diod., 19.48.1–6). These registers are supplemented by lists appearing in the so-called Testament of Alexander (Test. Alex. 117), the Alexander Romance (Ps.-Callisthenes 3.33.13–22; 52–61; Jul. Valerius 3.94; Leo Archipresbyteros, 3.58), and medieval sources (Synkellos, Chron. P 264 D–265 B; Kedrenos P 155 D). They are of diverging reliability, but as a group they provide a template that allows us to evaluate the personnel decisions taken by Alexander during his campaign across the Persian Empire. Again and again we see Alexander confirming satraps in office or replacing them by persons of his own choice. These operations make a reconstruction of the Late Achaemenid situation possible (Jacobs 1994: pp. 52–88).

Sources on Local Bureaucracies

Recent years have seen primary publication and intensive study of various archives and quasi-archival groups of documents. These include the Fortification Archive and – more modestly – the Treasury Archive from Persepolis (see the appraisal in Briant et al. 2008), bullae from a tower of the wall

DPe, St. of Darius, DNa	Q-texts in PFA	Ethnonyms in PFA
(Persia)		Persians
Elam		(Elamites)
Media		Medians
Babylonia		Babylonians
Arabia		Arabs
Assyria		Assyrians/Hattians
Egypt		Egyptians
Armenia		Armenians(?)
Cappadocia		Cappadocians
Lydia	Lydia	Sardians
Yaṣnā		"Greeks"
Yaṣnā takabarā		
Sagartia	Sagartia	Sagartians
Parthia		Parthians/Hyrcanians(?)
Drangiana	Drangiana	Drangianians
Areia	Areia	Areians
Bactria	Bactria	Bactrians
Sogdia		Sogdians
Chorasmia		
Sattagydia		
Arachosia	Arachosia	Arachosians/Paricanians
Hinduś	India	Indians
Gandāra	Gandara	Gandarians
Sakā haumavargā		Sakā
Sakā tigraxaudā		
Sakā tayai paradraya		
Maka/Macians	Maka	Macians
Skudra		Skudrians
Libyans		
Nubians		
Carians		Carians/Lycians
	Carmania	Carmanians
		Ākaufaciya(?)

Figure 59.3 Adjusted comparison of the countries mentioned in DPe, on the statue of Darius from Susa and in DNa, of the points of departure and arrival for travelers mentioned in PFA, and of the ethnic names mentioned in PFA.

over Kuh-e Ramat at the same place (Rahimifār 2005: pp. 72–76, 10; Razmjou 2008: p. 57), bullae from Daskyleion in Asia Minor (Kaptan 2002) and from Seyitömer Höyük (Kaptan 2010), the Idumean ostraka (Lemaire 2017), the correspondence of Aršama (Taylor 2013; Tuplin 2013), and the parchments from Bactria in the Khalili collection (Naveh and Shaked 2012). Combination of these and other primary sources into an overall picture of satrapal administration is nevertheless problematic because locating the documents within the imperial administrative structure poses significant difficulties.

Pathways to the Design of an Overall Picture

Methodology

These difficulties result from the fact that we are dealing with an accidental data set: its content and scope are determined by circumstances that we cannot fully understand or that are completely dependent on chance; it provides a documentation that is limited in space and time, and – both as a whole and in its component parts – is characteristically unevenly distributed across the relevant chronological period (cf. Tuplin 2008: pp. 324–325 taking the Fortification Archive as an example). Moreover, it is a matter of chance which aspects of bureaucratic activity are preserved and which are not (cf. Henkelman 2013: p. 534), and all the processes about which we learn are merely recorded or reflected by the sources, but never explained. It is symptomatic of the difficulties we face that the rank of the highest authorities figuring in an archive or a set of correspondence usually remains unclear, probably as a consequence of the fact that their position was known to everyone and did not need to be spelled out. So Henkelman has postulated that Parnakka, the highest official identifiable in the Persepolis Fortification Archive, was satrap of the province of Pārsa – and thus a distant predecessor of Peucestas (Henkelman 2011a: pp. 116–117; see Chapter 62 Persia). But he is never designated by this title. The same is true for Axvamazdā, an official in Bactria known to us from the correspondence with his subordinate, Bagavant. He too may have been head of the provincial administration, i.e. a successor of Dādaršiš (DB § 38) and a predecessor of Bessos (Arr., Anab. 3.8.3; 21.1; Diod. 17.73.2), but he again is never given a title. A similar situation arises with Aršāma (cf. Tuplin 2013: pp. 1–2). The result is that identification of these three high officials, Parnakka, Axvamazdā, and Aršāma, as satraps becomes possible only in light of information from classical sources. But if uncertainty remains about the interrelation of administrative figures who appear in extensive and comparatively complex sets of data, this will be all the more true when we are dealing with sources or groups of sources that provide less detailed information.

Under these circumstances the only methodological approach that might enable us to transform a mosaic of sources into a coherent picture is systematic comparison of all of the various (sets of) sources, one with another. Since, as we have seen, the sources come from various epochs and regions, we face a characteristic problem: in any particular case is the information we are given sufficiently similar across the range of times and places to indicate homogeneity and continuity of administrative practice or sufficiently discordant to suggest variation in different geographical regions and/or change in the course of the Achaemenid era? Resolving the issue is not assisted by the fear that if one sets out to look for a neat system, i.e. to trace an imperial signature, one

may be predisposed in favor of finding homogeneity and continuity. Still, there are certainly some relatively objective indications of homogeneity that are not vulnerable to this suspicion.

When Nakhthor was sent to Egypt by Aršāma (TADE A6.9; Taylor 2013: pp. 15–16), the document he carried was still valid beyond the next provincial border and ensured a supply of food for all parts of his journey. The same must have been true of the sealed documents mentioned repeatedly in the Persepolis Fortification Archive; and the administrative coordination involved is reflected by a consistent terminology, e.g. for “travel provisions” or “rations” (Briant 2009: p. 149). It was, in fact, vital that it should be so, since mobility within the empire (for soldiers, workers, messengers, and others) was among the basic requirements for its cohesion and stability.

One can also point to certain formal similarities. Bullae from Kuh-e Ramat, Dascylium and Seyitömer Höyük are comparable with each other. The same goes for a number of triangular tags said to have been found at Telloh in southern Mesopotamia and the uninscribed tablets from the Persepolis Fortification Archive (Henkelman et al. 2004: pp. 39–40, cf. also 41–44; see Chapter 56 Seals and Sealing). Even more telling are formal resemblances between some of the sets of correspondence mentioned above: The folding and sealing of the documents, the provision of an address and sometimes a summary of the content, and even the form of salutation are all similar – something ascribed by Folmer to a “well-organized system of chancelleries to produce official documents in a uniform way across the empire” (Folmer 2017) and by Henkelman to the impact of scribal schools (Henkelman 2013: pp. 531–532).

Another, and especially impressive, piece of evidence for a transregional system is provided by the discovery at Old Qandahar of fragments of one or two Elamite documents, which, in terms of the typology developed by Hallock for the Persepolis Fortification Archive, may be assigned to category V or W (“journals” or “accounts”), and one of which has a postscript of a sort also known from the Fortification Archive (Fisher and Stolper 2015: pp. 9–10 Fig. 5; pp. 21–22). Here the same mechanisms of information flow – the issue of receipts, the balance of the revenue and disbursement of commodities during shorter and longer periods of time – are recognizable and hint at similar practices of administration in the two places (Fisher and Stolper 2015; Azzoni and Stolper 2015: pp. 5–9; Henkelman 2017: pp. 169–174). The same is true for Susa (Henkelman 2017: pp. 113–129).

The Administrative Hierarchy

In approaching the salient groups of documents, therefore, there are grounds for expecting a degree of coherence and stability. From this perspective one thing that emerges from comparative investigation of the material at our

disposal is that it highlights distinct segments of an administrative hierarchy. For example, Henkelman convincingly argues that in the Persepolis Treasury Archive a lower administrative level is on show than in the Fortification Archive: both document processes in a limited realm, but the latter's sphere was clearly larger (Henkelman 2013: pp. 533–534; see Chapter 62 Persia). The Aramaic colophons – found only in the Fortification Archive – point at a still higher level of responsibility which monitored and, if necessary, made corrections and for which Aramaic was the language of communication (Azzoni and Stolper 2015). This was also the language in which the correspondence of Aršāma and Axxvamazdā, already mentioned several times, was written.

In the case of the letter of Aršāma written to secure rations for his subordinate Nakhtḥor during a journey from eastern Parapotamia to Egypt (TADE A6.9; Taylor 2013: pp. 15–16; on the localization of the waystations see Tuplin 2013: pp. 56–59), we dispose of a *prescriptive text*; as Henkelman stresses (Henkelman 2011a: pp. 99–100), that is something only rarely found at the administrative level of the Persepolis Fortification Archive, where it is represented (in Elamite translation) in the so-called *letter orders*. The mere existence of Aršāma's letter presupposes that those who had to fulfill the order contained in it were involved in the same activities that are documented in the Persepolis Fortification Archive – the storage and supply of commodities, the documentation of the process by receipts, “journals” and “accounts,” and the eventual archiving of salient records at a central place (Henkelman 2013: pp. 535–536; Fisher and Stolper 2015: p. 2).

The Aramaic version of the Xanthos trilingual (a set of texts that documents arrangements for the establishment of a cult of Carian gods on Lycian territory: Briant 1998) also represents an elevated level of administration, since it records the guarantee of juridical support which was requested in the Lycian and Greek versions. Tavernier (2017: pp. 383–384) assumes that the inscribed Aramaic version is the copy of a text that was archived in the satrap's office.

The salutations in Aramaic letters demonstrate in a rather straightforward way how differently equal-ranking persons and subordinates were addressed, thus providing a clear hint at the existence of steep administrative hierarchies (Tuplin 2013: pp. 3–9; Folmer 2017: pp. 419–432). This evidence is corroborated by sealing protocols. Here the use of only one seal for the dispatch of documents indicates that the seal owner in question had a capacity to make authoritative decisions that was not proper to officials of lower rank (Aperghis 1999: esp. pp. 162–191; Garrison 2008; see Chapter 62 Persia).

Hierarchical structure, observable in different ways in a variety of contexts, must have been an essential element of administrative organization. It is true that Greek and Latin sources rarely describe the steps of the hierarchy as clearly as in the case of the subordination of Zenis and Mania to Pharnabazus mentioned at the start of this chapter. Nevertheless, the possibility of

superiority and subordination within an administrative hierarchy must always be to hand as an interpretative tool when dealing with information given by classical authors. When the sources tell us about regional officials with different titles – e.g. the satraps of Lydia and Caria – and we find them active in the same area at different times, older interpretative approaches – starting from the assumption of a more egalitarian administrative structure – often postulated a change in the administrative landscape. Reports of this kind were understood as testimonies to a struggle over responsibilities and spheres of influence.² But if one assumes the existence of a hierarchy, it becomes superfluous to assume processes of displacement of this sort; instead one can reasonably conjecture that the persons involved represent different levels of responsibility within the administrative hierarchy. In the light of this sort of analysis, the geopolitical situation within the empire looks much more settled and stable.

Continuity and stability were, from various points of view, necessary preconditions for the effective operation of the empire's administration. Frequent shifts in administrative topography of the sort that have too readily been postulated would have had consequences that were hard to deal with. To prove this we need only return to the example of the road system: changes to accountability for road maintenance and the provisioning of waystations resulting from the alteration of administrative boundaries would have caused virtually insoluble logistic problems.

One should also think about the consequences if the center sat idly by while provincial administrators expanded their competence at the expense of their neighbors. Such a picture entails lots of officials losing parts of their domain or even their whole province. They would thus have shared the fate of those affected by putative interventions from the imperial center: for it is frequently assumed that rulers promoted their favorites by assigning them provinces or enlarging their spheres of competence, or punished them by limiting their power or removing them from office. But supposed actions of this sort are, as a rule, constructions born out of a need to explain overlaps of responsibility without allowing for the possibility of hierarchical order. Explanations of this sort mean that provinces were established or suspended, enlarged or split, and that office holders were deprived of their power or moved to other places. But behavior of this sort would mean that the king was wasting his most precious asset in the exercise of power, the loyalty of his subordinates. An official who might at any time be deprived of part of his authority or revenues, if not of his entire office, would hardly remain committed to his sovereign (cf. Jacobs 2016: esp. pp. 256–260).

Doubts about the continuity and stability of satrapal administration were fostered particularly by the fact that classical sources are most likely to throw light on imperial administration in times of crisis. From the Ionian Revolt to

the conquest of Alexander, the narratives of classical authors focus on crises: one need only think of Xenophon's *Anabasis*. When interpreting such narratives it is tempting to take the exceptional situation as a reason for exceptional measures. But if most of the information that reaches us about administration is understood as dealing with special cases, there remains little material from which to reconstruct ordinary processes. That being so, the proper question is whether critical situations do not in reality reveal the automatic responses they trigger, i.e. whether a crisis offers the chance of observing satrapal organization managing critical events in the way intended by its designers. Distrust in the interpretation of crises as the cause for ensuing interventions in the administrative structure should be prompted by the fact that the episode which has led to an especially large number of supposed changes being read into the sources and which serves as a paradigm of the principle, viz. the so-called Great Satraps' Revolt, was, as was convincingly argued by Weiskopf (1989), a construct of Diodorus (15.90.1–4) and never took place.

Satrapal Administration

The idea that the administrative system underwent numerous reconfigurations also contradicts the demonstrable fact that in its essentials, satrapal administration did not change during the entire period of Achaemenid rule and so, at the end of the epoch, does not look like something that has undergone a series of significant alterations. This becomes clear if one compares the entries in the *dahyāva*-lists of early Achaemenid times, especially the list of countries in the Bisotun inscription, with the provinces in which, during his conquest of the empire, Alexander either left existing governors in office or replaced them with persons of his own choosing (Figure 59.4). The list of places where Alexander took staffing decisions of this sort is – unsurprisingly in view of the interests of classical authors – more detailed in the “liberated” areas, particularly in Asia Minor, than in the rest of the empire, and it includes provinces of subordinate level and smaller extent like Hellespontine Phrygia, Greater Phrygia, Cilicia, and others, which do not figure in the *dahyāva*-lists. In the territories farther east, discrepancies of that kind do not occur; here the lists are nearly congruent with each other. Admittedly there are names in the *dahyāva*-lists which do not figure in the Alexander list (Figure 59.5), but this is only because Alexander did not conquer the territories in question (Chorasmia, the Saka realms, Arabia, and perhaps Armenia³).

The congruence between the Achaemenid lists of countries, the ethnonyms used in documents from the Fortification Archive, and the satrapies known from the time of Alexander proves the satrapal administration to be a coherent system and one that remained robust over a period of more than 200 years (Jacobs 2017). The oldest *dahyāva*-catalogue, that in the Bisotun inscription,

<i>dahyāva</i> -list DBi §6	Satrapies palpable under Alexander
Pārsa	Persis
---	Carmania
Ūḡa	Susiana
---	Territory of the Uxians
---	Paraitakene
Bābiruš	Babylonia
Aθurā	Assyria
---	Syria
---	Cilicia
Arbāya	---
Mudrāya	Egypt
---	Upper Egypt
---	Libya
tayai drayahyā: Sparda/Yauna	Lydia/Ionia
---	Hellespontine Phrygia
---	Caria
---	Greater Phrygia
Māda	Media
Armina	Armenia
Katpatuka	Cappadocia
---	Paphlagonia
Parθava	Parthia
---	Hyrkania
Zranka	Drangiana
Haraiva	Areia
Uvārazmī	[Chorasmia]
Bāxtriš	Bactria
Suguda	Sogdia
Gandāra	Cis-Indus-Satrapy (India I)
---	Paropamisadae
Saka	[Saka territories]
Θataguš	Trans-Indus-Satrapy (India II)
Harauvatiš	Arachosia
Maka	Gedrosia
---	India (India III)

Figure 59.4 Comparison of the provinces mentioned in the *dahyāva*-list of Bisotun with those for which personnel measures of Alexander III are documented.

is called by Darius I a list of countries which came to him (DB §6), i.e. which he inherited from his predecessors. Consequently there is no room for an administrative reform of the sort that some have extracted from Herodotus 3.89. All apparent indications of change under Darius I by comparison with earlier times should therefore be attributed to a change in the nature of our sources – nothing like the royal inscriptions or the Persepolis Fortification Archive is available before the reign of Darius – rather than to anything having actually changed in the real world. In fact, it would be difficult to explain how

<i>dahyāva</i> -list DBi §6	Satrapies palpable under Alexander adjusted
Pārsa	Persis
Ūḡa	Susiana
Bābiruš	Babylonia
Aθurā	Assyria
Arbāya	---
Mudrāya	Egypt
tayai drayahyā: Sparda/Yauna	Lydia/Ionia
Māda	Media
Armina	Armenia
Katpatuka	Cappadocia
Parθava	Parthia
Zranka	Drangiana
Haraiva	Areia
Uvārazmī	---
Bāxtriš	Bactria
Suguda	Sogdia
Gandāra	Cis-Indus-Satrapy (India I)
Saka	---
Θataguš	Trans-Indus-Satrapy (India II)
Harauvatiš	Arachosia
Maka	Gedrosia

Figure 59.5 Comparison of the provinces mentioned in the *dahyāva*-list of Bisotun with an adjusted list of those for which personnel measures of Alexander III are documented.

the empire created by Cyrus survived from the original conquests around the middle of the sixth century BCE to the time of Darius' presumed reforms, i.e. for a good quarter of a century, in the absence of a stabilizing administrative system. An effective satrapal administration is actually the only thing that can explain what gave the empire's huge territory the coherence that prevented it from falling apart during the great crisis of 522–520 BCE. The satraps Dādaršiš and Vivāna, who supported Darius during his struggle for the throne (DB §§ 38, 45–47), must have been installed by Cambyses II at the latest; and the Persepolis administration visible under Darius did not emerge from nothing but had pre-Darian antecedents: deployment of workers for construction work at the palace of Matannan is already documented in Cambyses' reign (Henkelman and Kleber 2007: esp. p. 170). It is not without reason that continuity from Cyrus to Darius has repeatedly been claimed in recent times (Briant 2010: p. 43; Henkelman 2011b: pp. 578–579).

If, then, we start from the assumption that Cyrus the Great – and also Cambyses II in Egypt – always immediately established an administrative structure in newly acquired territories, we can imagine this happening in the same way as in the time of Alexander. His approach (as we have already seen)

was to adopt existing structures, but, in doing so, he frequently replaced the highest officials, especially the “satraps.” Early Persian rulers must have acted in an analogous fashion. Their campaigns targeted the capitals of the empires or kingdoms under attack, be it Ecbatana (Nabonidus Chronicle II 3–4; Grayson 1975: II 3–4), Sardis (Hdt. 1.71–84), Babylon (Cyrus Cylinder 15–17; Schaudig 2001: p. 552, 555; Nabonidus Chronicle III, 5–20, esp. 5–18; Grayson 1975: pp. 109–110; Berossus, *Babyl. FGrHist* 680 F10a), or Memphis (Hdt. 3.10–13). The existing king was deposed and replaced by a satrap (Xen. *Cyr.* 8.7.11; Hdt. 1.153; Nabonidus Chronicle III 22; Hdt. 3.15). A similar process must be imagined in the east, for the rapidity with which territories in that region were conquered presupposes the existence of structures comparable with those of the western empires just listed (Rollinger, personal communication). Bactra and Arachotos/i will have been the principal places there and the headquarters of the satraps named in the Bisotun inscription.

The continuity and stability postulated here can also be recognized in the undiminished importance of former capital cities throughout the Achaemenid epoch. As far as we can tell from available sources, it was only the satraps associated with these cities who were always freshly appointed by the court: otherwise satrapal positions were hereditary either in a native family or in an Iranian one brought in from outside. Moreover, where information exists, we see that the satraps appointed by the court were princes of the Achaemenid family or members of the privileged families of Darius I’s closest supporters in his struggle for the crown (Jacobs 1994: pp. 103–104 n. 61–62).

The incorporation of newly acquired territories automatically established an administrative hierarchy in which provinces belonging to conquered empires became sub-provinces of the new satrapal complexes, e.g. Cappadocia in the case of Lydia, Assyria in the case of Babylonia, Libya and Nubia in the case of Egypt.

The replacement of former rulers by high-ranking officials⁴ meant that where there had once been distinct concepts and ideologies of kingship appropriate to the various erstwhile kingdoms, there was now uniformity. The consequences of this process of integration are in a sense comparable with the use of language in the administrative hierarchy. Whereas at the upper level Aramaic was used for empire-wide communication in a surprisingly homogeneous form, on the regional level other languages were very often in use: Elamite, Akkadian, Demotic, Lydian, Greek, etc. In terms of this comparison, the use of Aramaic in the upper levels of the hierarchy corresponds to a certain homogeneity in the administrative structure. The position of Dādaršiš and Bessos in Bactria was comparable with that of Artaphernes and Tissaphernes in Lydia, and that of Maussollos in Caria and of Syennesis in Cilicia was similar to that of Porus in the Panğāb (cf. the relevant sections and the reconstruction of the

administrative hierarchy in Jacobs 1994, esp. the stemmata on pp. 118 and 208, and on pp. 118, 147, and 228).

On the Duties of the Satraps

A full description of the duties incumbent on satraps would require a separate and thorough examination of the evidence. For this reason only a few preliminary observations can be offered here. The competence of administrative centers headed by satraps applied to clearly defined areas. One such area is visible in the Persepolis Fortification Archive. According to Henkelman, it consists of a zone about as large as Switzerland, which extends from Ram Hormuz in the northwest to Nīrīz in the southeast; beyond its borders responsibility lay with other administrative centers (Henkelman 2013: pp. 535–536). The observation that satraps also had authority outside their provinces is only seemingly in contradiction with this statement. We do learn from documents in the Persepolis Fortification Archive that the Carmanian satrap Karkīš was entitled to access provisions from the Persepolis economy to furnish his table (Henkelman 2010: pp. 704–713; see Chapter 62 Persia), and, as we have already seen, Aršāma could issue a *balmi* to cover Nakhtōr's journey from Mesopotamia to Egypt. But, while this does demonstrate that a satrap's authority did not simply end at the borders of his satrapy, it does not mean that he could encroach upon the responsibility of other satraps.

The satrapal administration has to be understood as a system that – at least theoretically – encompassed the territory of the empire comprehensively. Even groups whose way of life made location within clearly defined geographic boundaries difficult were registered by the administration, as is evident from the examples of the Pateischorians, Cossaeans, Maraphians, and Tapurians in the Persepolis Fortification Archive (Henkelman 2011c; cf. Jacobs 2017: esp. n. 79). The frontiers of administrative responsibility that emerge from the Fortification Archive were often clearly recognizable in reality. Mountain ranges and deserts, passes and river crossings could mark the boundary between two provinces (Jacobs 1994: pp. 117–251, 2006). Sometimes specific markers made borders visible (cf. e.g. Hdt. 7.30: στήλη), and sometimes borders were secured by fortresses (cf. e.g. Hdt. 5.52: φυλακτήριον).

Earlier we defined satraps as the highest officials of a particular administrative center, irrespective of its hierarchical level. Their position as heads of administration clearly entailed a complex range of liabilities which corresponded to their position as “protectors of empire/sovereignty,” i.e. as representatives of the central power. This also included functions in the religious realm: that is why the satrap of Caria can turn up as guarantor for implementation of the arrangements recorded in the Xanthos trilingual.

The sources at our disposal suggest that among the tasks of a satrap his responsibility for the income of the province and its use was especially important. Herodotus mentions that Artaphernes, the satrap of Lydia, had a land register drawn up as a basis for fixing taxes (φόρους) (Hdt. 6.42; cf. Diod. 10.25.4). This tempts one to think that some of the commodities whose movement is documented in the Persepolis Fortification Archive result from comparable taxation of land holders (cf. Aperghis 1998; Tuplin 2008: pp. 326–383).

Other tax yield was generated in the form of labor services. Some time ago Briant (2010: p. 43) pointed to a substantive connection between the obligation of a Babylonian recorded on a tablet to work for a period of time at Susa and the reference to the Babylonians “who made the bricks” in inscriptions from the same place (DSf §13; DSz §12). Waerzeggers took Babylonians in Susa as an example to show how labor and tax flows were organized (Waerzeggers 2010). The results of such organization are recorded in a more general way in the inscriptions DSaa, DSz, and DSf. DSaa obviously invites us to see a parallel between the enumeration of materials used in the construction of the palace in §3 and the list of countries given in §4: in effect it offers a paraphrase of the formula known from other inscriptions, “... these (are) the countries which I seized ..., to me they brought levies” (*bāji-*) (DNa §3; cf. DB §7; DPe §2; DSe §3; XPh §3). In DSf and DSz the names of provinces and the services rendered are even more directly related to each other: particular materials are linked with particular places and we are told the origin of the workers who carried out certain tasks in the erection of the palace, for instance the making of the bricks (DSf §§8–13; DSz §§6–12). The Ionians and Lydians (*Yaunā utā Spardiyā*), named as workers of stone (DSf §13; cf. DSz §12), make one think of a tablet such as NN 2108 from the Persepolis Fortification Archive which attests that the satrap Irdapirna (=Artaphernes) dispatched a group of Ionians (*yunuyap*) from his province to the king (Henkelman 2010: p. 743; for the meaning of the term “Ionians” cf. Rollinger and Henkelman 2009). Only the satrap could authorize transfers of people of this sort.

Besides the responsibility for tax yield, classical sources stress the military duties of the satraps, to suppress insurgency and secession (cf. the Bisotun inscription §§38 and 45–47 and the compilation of sources in Jacobs 2003b), to protect their territory in situations such as the march of the 10 000 Greeks through the satrapy of Armenia (Xen., Anab. 4.3.3–4; 4.3–6; Jacobs 1994: pp. 184–185), to defend the empire against external aggression (a good example is provided by the battle at the Granicus, in which several satraps took part⁵), or to support campaigns of conquest (see, e.g. Cambyses’ military expedition against Egypt: Hdt. 3.44). The Persepolis Fortification Archive also offers a glimpse of the military responsibility of a satrap in documents about the provisioning of Karkīš (satrap of Carmania) and a great number of soldiers, *taššup* or *taššup hallinup* (Henkelman 2010: pp. 704–713).

The complexity of the satraps' responsibilities (which can only be sketched here) actually turned their courts, functioning as centers of satrapal administration, into branches of the royal court – precisely the model postulated by Xenophon when he pictured Cyrus commanding his new satraps to establish courts that emulate the royal one (Xen. Cyr. 8.6.11–14).

NOTES

- 1 For Carmania as subunit of Persia see Jacobs (1994: pp. 197–99; 2017: p. 15 n. 76); for Hyrcania as subunit of Parthia see Jacobs (1994: p. 187); for Lycia as subunit of Caria see Jacobs (2003a: pp. 316–322; 2019: pp. 47–54). For Ākaṣfaciā, Pateischorians, Cossaeans, Maraphians, and Tapourians as tribes dwelling in the province of Pārsa see Henkelman and Stolper (2009: p. 287 with n. 43, 300), Henkelman (2011c), and Jacobs (2017: p. 15–16 with n. 79). For an assignment of the Hattians to the Assyrians and of the Paricanians to the Arachosians see Henkelman and Stolper (2009: pp. 275, 305–306). For the rationale behind the appearance of subunits such as Skudra, Sagartia, Yaṣnā or Karka in the *dahyāva*-catalogues see Jacobs (2017: esp. pp. 16–23).
- 2 An extreme position is taken in this respect by Weiskopf (1989: esp. pp. 14–19), who assumes that every new satrap had to fight for his sphere of influence in competition with other officials.
- 3 For a discussion of the possibility that Armenia, or at least parts of it, was conquered by Alexander see Messerschmidt (1990: pp. 48–49).
- 4 The author has designated governors who held office in the old capitals as “Great Satraps,” a term that reflects their paramount position in contrast to lower-rank “Main” and “Minor Satraps.” This terminology is simply a way of describing the administrative hierarchy and, with possible exceptions (e.g. *κάρωνος*), has no equivalent in the ancient tradition.
- 5 Among the commanders who deployed their troops against Alexander at the Granicus were, to begin with, Spithridates, satrap of Lydia and Ionia (Arr. Anab. 1.12.8; 15,8; Diod. 17.19.4; 20.2), and Arsites, satrap of Hellespontine Phrygia (Arr. Anab. 1.12.8; 16.3). Also involved were Atizyes, satrap of Greater Phrygia (Arr. Anab. 2.11.8), and Mithrobouzanes, satrap of Cappadocia (Arr. Anab. 1.16.3; Diod. 17.21.3).

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author is very grateful to Christopher Tuplin for critical comments on this chapter and for his assistance with the English version of the text.

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- Henkelman, W.F.M. (2017). Imperial signature and imperial paradigm – Achaemenid administrative structure and system across and beyond the Iranian plateau. In B. Jacobs, W.F.M. Henkelman, and M.W. Stolper, (eds.), *Administration in the Achaemenid Empire – Tracing the Imperial Signature* (Classica et Orientalia 17). Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, pp. 45–256. A methodically impressive reconstruction of the administrative landscape of the Achaemenid Empire as it is recoverable from written primary sources and archaeological evidence.
- Henkelman, W.F.M., Stolper, M.W. (2009). Ethnic identity and ethnic labelling at Persepolis: the case of the Skudrians. In P. Briant, M. Chauveau (eds.), *Organisation des pouvoirs et contacts culturels dans les pays de l’empire achéménide* (Persika 14). Paris: de Boccard, pp. 271–329. Gives an overview of the ethnonyms found in the Persepolis Fortification tablets and defines the position of the entities termed this way within the administrative landscape.
- Jacobs, B. (1994). *Die Satrapienverwaltung im Perserreich zur Zeit Darius’ III.* (Beihefte zum Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients, Reihe B 87). Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert. The first reconstruction of the administration of the Achaemenid Empire as an encompassing hierarchical system and, based on this, an attempt to describe the political geography of the empire.
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Naveh, J., Shaked, S. (2012). *Aramaic Documents from Ancient Bactria (Fourth Century BCE) from the Khalili Collections*. London: Khalili Family Trust. The editio maior of one of the most important groups of existing documents for the satrapal administration.

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CHAPTER 60

Hierarchy and *ethno-classe dominante*

Gian Pietro Basello

According to Xenophon (Cyr. 8.6.7–8), Cyrus the Great sent several friends (*philoi*) as satraps in various regions of the Achaemenid-controlled world: Arabia, Cappadocia, Greater Phrygia, Lydia, Ionia, Caria, Hellespontine Phrygia, and Aeolis. Other regions, having willingly supported his Babylonian expedition, deserved different treatment: They had to pay tribute but were not governed by “Persian satraps.” This passage reflects an actual practice: Relatives of the king and members of the Persian elite were sent as governors and high officials in the subjugated areas. Briant called this phenomenon the “imperial diaspora” (Briant 1996: p. 366).

Artaphernes, brother of Darius I “from the same father,” may be taken as an example. He was appointed as satrap (*hyparchos*) of Sardis after the Scythian campaign (c. 513 BCE) of Darius I (Hdt. 5.25.1) and is related to Sardis also in the Elamite administrative tablet PF 1404 from the Persepolis Fortification wall (dated to 495 BCE). His homonymous son, nephew of Darius, led (as *stratēgos*) the army against Greece in 490 BCE (Hdt. 6.94.2) and was the commander of the Lydians and Mysians in the army of Xerxes 10 years later (7.74.2).

A different application of the same basic principle is represented by Parnaka (**Farnaka*- in Old Iranian; Tavernier 2007: § 4.2.567), attested in several Persepolis Fortification Tablets as a high official, probably the director of the Persepolis administration. One of his seals (PFS 16*) bears the inscription “seal of Parnaka, son of Arshama.” Even if Arshama was a common name in the Persian elite, he was probably the grandfather of Darius according to the

genealogy of the Bisotun inscription (§ 2) and therefore Parnaka would be the paternal uncle of Darius (Briant 1996: p. 437). According to Thucydides (*Peri tou Peloponnēsiou polemon* I,129,1), Artabazos, son of Pharnakes, known in Herodotus (8.126.1) as a “noteworthy” (*logimos*) among the Persians, was placed in charge of the satrapy of Daskyleion (Debord 1999: pp. 91–104) by Xerxes. It is possible that the father of this Artabazos was the Parnaka of the Persepolis tablets. Artabazos was succeeded by his son, establishing a dynasty whose rule was endorsed by the Achaemenid kings until nearly the end of their reign.

The long-lasting Pharnacid dynasty of Daskyleion remains an exception in the Achaemenid domain, but many other insertions of a relative in the chain of command are known. This probably involved a confirmation by the king, as noted by Arrian (*Anab.* 2.1.3; 2.2.1) for Memnon and his nephew Pharnabazus as commander (*hēgemōn*) of the Persian fleet in 334 BCE, but probably the confirmation was only a formal act if the balance of powers leaned toward the succession. The transmission of power inside the same family may appear as a threat to the control of the king (Briant 1996: pp. 350–351); anyway, it was mainly an effective strategy which, replicating the model according to which the kingship had to remain in the royal family, avoided power struggles and assured stability to the kingdom. Reflecting the core components of the contemporary social identity, the Achaemenid ideology was addressed to the individual as part of a people and a family (to be intended in a wider sense): Loyalty to the king was not a personal affair but had to be honored for the good name of the family and the salvation of one’s own people. This ideology is at work in the speech that Xenophon attributed to the dying Cambyses (*Cyr.* 8.5.22–27) as a foundation myth for the dynastic pact between an Achaemenid king and his people (Briant 1996: pp. 365–366).

Hierarchy

According to Xenophon (*Cyr.* 8.1.13–15), Cyrus the Great, being afraid of neglecting his properties (whose income funded his kingship) or the public welfare, conceived a hierarchical structure following the example of the army (*stratiōtikē syntaxis*); this way, he could take care (*epimeleesthai*) of the whole while staying in touch with a few persons only (*oligois dialegesthai*). This is a kind of foundation myth for the structured organization which sustained the Achaemenid rule for two centuries.

Actually, the satrapies were hierarchically organized and this hierarchy was reflected also on the prestige of the related satrapal posts. The great satrapies were held by Achaemenid princes excluded from the throne or by members of the privileged Persian families bound to the royal one. In Egypt, for example,

we know of the governor Achaemenes, who was son of Darius and brother of Xerxes (Hdt. 7.7.1), while Arshama is addressed as “son of the House” (*br byt*’ in TADAE A6.3–4, 7; also D14.6), i.e. prince of the royal house, in letters. Hereditary offices, acting as regulated autonomies, were usually reserved for minor satrapies like Daskyleion (Jacobs 1999).

A list of the known satraps and military commanders is made up nearly entirely of Persian names (Briant 1996: pp. 362–364), with the only relevant exception being Bēlshunu, son of Bēlušurshu. Bēlshunu, who was the first governor (LÚ.NAM/*pīhātu*) of Babylon (i.e. district subgovernor) and later of the whole *Across-the-River* in the last decades of the fifth century BCE (Stolper 1990: pp. 199–204), provides also a useful example of career progression.

Moving down the hierarchy, we find more and more actors involved in different offices, as hinted by the following passage from the pseudo-Aristotelian *De mundo* (398a) (first century CE or earlier):

The entire empire of Asia ... had been divided up into peoples by generals (*stratēgoi*), satraps (*satrapai*) and princes (*basileis*), dependants of the great king (*douloi tou megalou basileōs*), [who were in their turn obeyed by] day couriers (*hēmerodromoi*), scouts (*skopoi*), messengers (*angeliaphoroi*), and observers of fire signals (*phryktōriōn te epoptēres*). (Transl. Wiesehöfer 1996: p. 34.)

According to this passage, the management of the army came first. Then followed the administrative control, represented by satraps, and local autonomies, perhaps hinted at by the mention of kings (*basileis*). All were in direct touch with the Great King. This connection had to be physically maintained through the officers in charge of communications.

Several titles and offices are mentioned in the sources. The terms *hyparchos* and *pīhātu*, generically pointing to a governor, are often used instead of “satrap” in the Greek and Babylonian sources respectively (Briant 1996: p. 76). *Pīhātu* is attested also in Aramaic as *pht*’. For example, in the Aramaic documents from Bactria (Naveh and Shaked 2012), counting 30 exemplars on leather internally dated to the period 353–324 BCE (i.e. extending in the first years of Alexander the Great, apparently without transformations), the governor (*pht*’) Bagavant, whose residence was in Khulmi/Khulm (c. 80 km east of Bactra/Balkh, northern Afghanistan), is clearly under the authority of Akhvamazda, probably the satrap of Bactria: People had sent complaints about Bagavant, who seems to have disobeyed Akhvamazda’s orders (A1). Bagavant is mentioned together with *dyny*’, probably meaning “the judges,” and Ahuradata, defined as “his *prtrk*” (**frataraka*-; Tavernier 2007: § 4.4.7.42), i.e. the administrative head of a district, a title known also in Egyptian Aramaic papyri where, exceptionally, a **frataraka* with an Egyptian name is also known

(Briant 1988: pp. 160–161). These officials had power over properties, taxes, and people. Note that their personal names are linguistically Iranian. Other titles and offices, such as the “supplier of barley” (*ywbr*’), the “supervisor” (*’pdyt*’), and the “ration provider” (*ptpkny*’), usually followed by the place where the officer was in charge, are at a lower level and pertained to local administrations. Their names (Vakhshudata, Vishtaspa; Atarvaza, Ahuradata, Amavadata; Danga) are Iranian too; in the case of Vakhshudata, a connection with a local feature (the river Vakhsh/Oxus) is easily recognizable. This description of the Bactrian administration does not necessarily fit other Achaemenid-controlled areas: As remarked by Jacobs, “the lower the [administrative] level one chooses, the less comparable the individual areas become, because the administration was to a greater extent characterized by deeply rooted traditional structures” (Jacobs 2006).

The Persian Elite

The imperial diaspora triggered by the Achaemenid conquests involved many other Persians in high levels of management and especially in the army and administration. The classical sources provide several examples for the highest levels: Aryandes, the governor of Egypt (c. 522–519 BCE), chose Amasis, a Maraphian (*anēr Maraphios*; a Persian tribe according to Hdt. 1.125.3) bearing an Egyptian name, and Badres, from the Pasagadae tribe (*genos*), as commanders (*stratēgoi*) of the Egyptian army in the expedition against Barca in Libya (Hdt. 4.167.1). Thanks to the Aramaic documents, we know that the governors (*prtrk*: Ramnadainā, Parnu(š), Vidranga) and commanders (*rb hyl*?: Rauka, Vidranga, Nāfaina; the office became practically hereditary) at Elephantine and Aswan were Persians too, just like Mazdayazna (Tavernier 2007: § 4.2.1082), an official (*pqyd*) of the province of Thebes (Briant 1988: pp. 161–162). Even if the sources are mainly concerned with officials, common people bearing Iranian names are also mentioned occasionally, being examples of a more variegated Persian presence which was deployed through policies of colonization in some areas.

While Herodotus bothered to mention the tribe or origins of many of the individuals he wrote about, often we have to rely on onomastics alone to surmise ethnic appartenance. Unfortunately, this method is weak since names can be changed. A clear example comes from a Babylonian tablet (Joannès and Lemaire 1996, p. 6) dated to the 26th regnal year of Darius (496 BCE) where a “royal chamberlain” (*ustarbar*; Tavernier 2007: § 4.4.7.121) bears the Iranian name Bagazušta (Tavernier 2007: § 4.2.310) although being qualified as Egyptian (^{lú}*mi-šir-a-a*), son of Marḥarpu (an Egyptian anthroponym). Anyway, the mere choice of a Persian name, even if not necessarily borne by a

Persian native, is proof of Persian presence (if the name reflected ethnicity) or at least Persian influence (if adopted) in the area.

Even if it is difficult to quantify the Persian presence, there is no doubt that the satraps and the Persian officials transplanted with their families into the conquered areas formed a new powerful elite (*classe dominante*) which was differentiated from the rest of the population also on ethnic grounds (*ethno-classe*), i.e. a dominant socioethnic class. Assuming that the Persians formed a minority, such *ethno-classe* had to be ideologically maintained in order to hold the power in its hands, otherwise it would have been bound to fade over time. On the one hand, biological reproduction had to be endogamously enforced in order to increase demographic growth (Briant 1987: pp. 20–21); on the other hand, a Persian education had to be imparted to children (Briant 1987: p. 22) in order to retain the distinctive sociocultural traditions. The main seat of ideological reproduction was the royal or satrapal court.

There was no lack of deviations from these practices since it was not possible to hold the power only by military means. The easiest way to share the power, at least apparently, with the local communities was to build relationships with the local elites. The status of being Persian had to be defined in some way and exceptions found their way into it (see, for example, the Persian sons that the Greek Metiochos had by his Persian wife; Hdt. 6.41.4). As a side effect, the permanence of a family/clan in the same place favored the development of common interests with the local elite to the possible detriment of the royal power (Briant 1987: pp. 18–20); to prevent this risk, a system of reciprocal control, embodied by the “eyes/ears of the king” of the Classical sources (e.g. Cyr. 8.2.10–12), was enacted. The consideration of existing social structures, pragmatic behavior on both sides, and efforts to achieve a balance between the use of violence, concessions to local autonomy, and the own ideological demands were favorable to Achaemenid control.

Local Elites

The contribution of local elites to the management of power should not be underestimated, if only because it was needed, especially at the beginning of the military expansion. Egyptian documents show that the lower ranks of the army (such as the *degel* chiefs) and administration were held by Egyptians (Chauveau in Briant and Chauveau 2009). High officials such as Udjahorresne (in Kuhrt 2007: pp. 117–122), Khnemibre (BdE 11,11–23), and, probably, Ahmose (BdE 11,6–7) continued their careers under the Persian “Great Chief of all foreign lands” too (Vittmann in Briant and Chauveau 2009). The autobiography of Udjahorresne, inscribed on his naophorous statue, states that he was overseer of the royal fleet under the pharaohs Amasis and Psammetichus

III, but not under Cambyses and Darius. It is likely that he left this office in Persian hands (see the abovementioned Maraphian commander). Anyway, Udjahorresne retained a high position as “friend” and “administrator of the Palace” of the Achaemenid kings (Briant 1988: p. 164). The inscriptions of these Egyptian officials represent also a sort of justification for their collaboration with the foreigners (Menu 1995).

Different situations are attested throughout the Achaemenid-controlled areas. The local, pre-existing, elite could also maintain a large degree of autonomy. Xenophon (Hell. 3.1.10–15) recounted the deeds of Zenis and his wife Mania. Zenis “acted as a satrap” on the Aeolis (the region to the southwest of Daskyleion toward the Aegean sea) on behalf of the satrap of Daskyleion, Pharnabazos (II), to whom he is said to be “friend” (*philos*). After Zenis’ death, Pharnabazos confirmed Mania in the office (*archē*). Mania not only kept some cities for Pharnabazos but also conquered other cities on the coast thanks to a Greek mercenary force, becoming one of Pharnabazos’ favorite governors (*hyparkhoi*). As remarked by Briant (1987: pp. 1–6), this account attests that centralism and local autonomy were not opposed models but complementary means of political control. The relationship between Mania and Pharnabazos seems to be well regulated in term of rights (control and management of the cities), duties (tribute and gifts), and rewards (honors and confidence) in a hierarchical framework where the Persian stood at the top; this model was replicated by Mania with those who served her.

A Multiethnic Elite

The encounter between Persian and local elites was not a one-way process. Ten short hieroglyphic inscriptions (BdE 11,24–34), found at Wadi Hammamat along the old road connecting Coptos to the Red Sea, were dedicated to Egyptian deities, especially Min of the city of Coptos, by two brothers defined as officials of Persia (*srs n prs*). Their names, Atiwahy and Aryawrata, and the names of their parents, Artames and Qandju, are presumably Iranian (Tavernier 2007: §§ 4.2.203, 205; § 4.2.134; § 4.2.1486; § 4.2.625) and therefore there is little doubt that we are dealing here with two Persian officials who had come to Egypt as a result of the Achaemenid conquest. In one instance (BdE 11,33), Aryawrata is said to be called Djed-her, an Egyptian name. It is possible that Aryawrata was fascinated by the Egyptian civilization, but this data alone cannot be taken as proof of an Egyptianization of the Persian elite: The taking on of a local identity does not necessarily require the quitting of the native one; moreover, it is easier to adopt some of the habits of the place where one has to live than to reject them wholly. More interestingly, the dates of the inscriptions range from at least the last regnal year of Darius

I (486/485 BCE, cf. BdE 11,28) to the 17th of Artaxerxes I (448/447 BCE), attesting the longevity of the officials and the stability of their offices.

Another product of Persian–Egyptian acculturation is provided by a funerary stela engraved on behalf of Djedherbes and found at North Saqqara in 1994. Judging from onomastics, his father, Artama, was a Persian and his mother, Tanefrether, an Egyptian. Although the general structure and the contents of the stela are Egyptian, many details (e.g. the winged sun disk with the feathered tail instead of the uraei, the dress of the seated figure, probably the deceased) seem foreign and especially Persian. The stela, together with other exemplars with Aramaean, Phoenician, and Carian features, proves the existence of a workshop specialized in transcultural representations for a foreign audience in response to an existing demand (Wasmuth 2010).

The stelae with reliefs found in the area of Daskyleion (Kaptan 2003: pp. 190–191; add the exemplar in Polat 2007), originally placed as markers for burials, are usually mentioned as a product of Persian presence and its influence on the local elite. The reliefs have been considered as Persian in subject although carved in a somewhat Greek style, from which the label “Graeco-Persian art” stems (Briant 1996: pp. 518–519); this label has been rightly criticized, emphasizing the original regional character of these monuments, whereas the Persian features could be realistic details rather than mere artistic influences (Gates 2002; Jacobs 2014). In four instances an inscription (two in Aramaic and two in Phrygian, one of the latter with a shortened Greek text) is associated with the relief. According to the Aramaic inscription, the stela found at Sultaniye Köy (Kaptan 2003, no. III) was commissioned by Aryabāma (*ʾrybm*) to honor Addā (*ʾdh*). Aryabāma is an Iranian name (Tavernier 2007: § 4.2.122) while Addā is Semitic. The other Aramaic inscription (Kaptan 2003, no. I), found at Aksakal, has Semitic anthroponyms and theonyms, while the onomastics of the two Phrygian inscriptions (Kaptan 2003, no. IX from Daskyleion; no. XIV from Vezirhan, more than 100 km east of Daskyleion) is local (e.g. the Phrygian name Manes). Both the figurative style and the paleography point to a dating between the fifth and fourth centuries BCE (Kaptan 2003: p. 192). Even if the craftsmanship of the stelae is not homogeneous, their monumentality assures that the burials belonged to the elite. The strong standardization of the subjects (procession, banquet, hunting) points to a basic layer of values shared by this elite. The proximity to Daskyleion suggests that the stelae as an artistic phenomenon are a consequence of the polarization of people and resources generated by the satrapal center; the seal impressions of the Daskyleion bullae (Kaptan 2002), with their imagery and the royal name seals, give a glimpse of the movement of goods and people implied by the satrapal seat, not to speak of the direct connection with the ruling power. Although it is risky to associate ethnicity with artistic categories or onomastics, the stelae were likely tokens of a multiethnic elite.

The Achaemenid impact is clearly recognizable in the material evidence of a great satrapal center like Sardis. According to Dusinberre (2003: p. 199), after the military conquest, attested by massive destruction levels, a new artistic style, found in new objects (e.g. pyramidal stamp and cylinder seals, gold clothing appliques), was developed. From the point of view of our artistic taxonomy, the iconography shows both Persian and Greek influences, resulting in a blend which is distinctive of Sardis. The traditional *skyphoi* were replaced by the so-called Achaemenid bowls for drinking also among the common people, possibly through a process of emulation of the elite (Dusinberre 2003: p. 202). How much does this artistic/material assimilation reflect a social acculturation and the common system of values required to establish a multiethnic elite? And how much was the use of these seals and ornaments the result of political involvement of the Lydian elite rather than an illusory emulation of the *ethno-classe*? It is difficult to correlate material evidence with ethnic categories, even if surely the Persians attracted sectors of the local elites, which adopted Persian traits out of interest or spontaneously under the influence of royal ideology.

Besides onomastics, another method to spot the Persian presence is the material or textual evidence for the cult of Iranian deities outside the Persian heartland. Religious traditions are a distinctive component of the social identity, but they can be changed or assimilated too, especially if it was more a question of worship than of faith. Adaptation to/adoption of local deities or practices is attested (Briant 1987: pp. 16–27), for example, in the dedicatory inscriptions to Min of Coptos by Atiwahy and Aryawrata.

* * *

In our search for the Persian *ethno-classe* we have focused mainly on Daskyleion, Sardis, and Egypt. Many other examples, of a similar nature as well as entirely different, could be drawn from the textual and material evidence for the aforementioned and other areas, all of which bear witness to the presence of the imperial diaspora in the conquered countries and their efforts to dominate and exploit them. The cohesion of the *ethno-classe* could be questioned in single geographic and chronological frameworks, but it was generally strong, due to the Persian traditions enforced and molded by the imperial ideology. In any case, this class could not be a completely closed system in its historical development. Compromises were needed and were made. Therefore it is not always necessary to elude exceptions like the **frataraka* bearing an Egyptian name, supposing that he was a Persian with an Egyptian byname. Nor is it necessary to contrast the *ethno-classe* to the development of a multiethnic elite. The blurred area corresponds to the margin given by the fact that ethnic appartenance is not a biological matter but a continuously (re)defined cultural categorization. “Persian” styles or concepts could be rapidly assimilated, losing their imperial external character and becoming part of the social perception of one’s own world.

Beyond the definition of an *ethno-classe*, its function is also relevant. As a fresh element in the pre-existing social texture, the Persians held the balance of power in local struggles at all levels (government and administration, but also institutional and private disputes) and exploited it to their advantage, making their ideology/control accepted by local elites/populations. The role played by the Persian governor (*prtrk*) Vidranga (*Wydrng*) in the quarrel between the Judaeen garrison (*hyl' yhwdy'*) and the Khnum priests (*kmr*) of Elephantine is exemplary (TADAE A4.7–8). It is also possible that the Persian *ethno-classe* had been deceived and manipulated in the framework of local, pre-existing and continuing power struggles at various levels of society.

A complete history of the Persians who remained in Asia Minor, Egypt, Bactria, and elsewhere after the end of the Achaemenid dynasty is still to be written. The inscription of Amyzon (Caria) (Robert and Robert 1983, p. 2; Kuhrt 2007: p. 867, no. 17.36[iii]), dated to the fourth regnal year (321/320 BCE) of Philip III of Macedon, granted citizenship and tax immunity to Bagadates and his son, Ariaramnes (Briant 2006, pp. 328–330), two Persians according to their names. The involvement of Bagadates in the sanctuary of Artemis is also remarkable and is probably confirmed for his descentance by another inscription (Robert and Robert 1983, p. 18) more than a century later. Was this an isolated episode or can it be used as an example of local integration of Persians, either as ex-*ethno-classe* or self-made entrepreneurs?

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CHAPTER 61

Deportations

Josef Wiesehöfer

General Remarks

The size and structure of a – historical or recent – population are continuously changing because of demographic factors such as fertility, mortality and migration, that is, the ratio of the number of births and deaths, the balance of immigration and emigration. The term migration denotes the geographical relocation of people. Deportation (from Latin *deportare* “to take away,” “to remove”) as a special form of migration is the state-ordered and forced transfer of people to other areas. It is based on the current law of the state that conducts the deportation, in our case that of the Persian Empire. Unlike an “impelled” or “imposed” migration, such as the movement of refugees, in which the migrant retains a certain influence on the decision whether he is going to leave his home or not, the deportee is not at all free to decide. Also not to be included among the deportations are banishments and exiles as we know them from ancient Hellas or Rome (cf. also the so-called *deportatio in insulam*) because what is ultimately intended here is expulsion (for a certain

This chapter owes vital hints and insights to the dissertation of Chiara Matarese M.A. (Matarese (2021)) and to the article of Bert van der Spek (2014). Also useful is the general article by Kehne (2009).

period of time or permanently) rather than relocation. In the case of deportations, we have to distinguish between domestic and inter-state deportations: in the former case, the state is forcing some of its own subjects to find new settlements, in the second, it leads a person or a group from foreign territories into its own dominions.

The effort and the costs involved in a deportation, which was a common political measure in ancient empires, were enormous. Moreover, the deportees' new "home" was often predetermined. Thus, the imperial authorities, who had undoubtedly also used deportations as a means of punishment for criminal offences, must have had more reasons than this for executing a deportation. Besides the Persian kings' motives for the forced relocation of persons or groups, this chapter will address the following fields of investigation: the legal and social status of the deportees, the procedure of the relocation, the extent of the Persian deportation phenomenon and – connected to the latter – the comparison of the Achaemenid deportations with those of the preceding Ancient Near Eastern empires (not least those of the Assyrians, about which we are much better informed). This last aspect leads us to the source problems.

The Sources (and Their Problems)

Within ancient tradition, a total of 12 cases of Persian deportations is attested (the list given here states the deportees and their old and/or new home): (1) Egyptian craftsmen are sent to Susa in the time of Cambyses [Ktes. F 13a (10), p. 117 Lenfant; Diod. I 46.4]; (2) Barcaeans are sent to Bactria in the time of Darius I [Hdt. 4.200–204]; (3) Paconians are sent to Phrygia in 512/1 BCE (most of whom return during the Ionian Revolt in 494 BCE) [Hdt. 5.12–17.1, 23.1, 98]; (4) Milesians are sent to Ampe on the mouth of the Tigris after the Ionian Revolt [Hdt. 6.19.2–20.1; Plin. nat. 6.159]; (5) Residents of Eretria are sent to Cissia or Media in 490 BCE [Hdt. 6.119; Plat. Menex. 240 a-b; leg. 3.698 c-d; Diog. Laert. 3.33 with Anth. Pal. 7.259 = IEOG 177; Anth. Plan. 7.256; Strab. 16.1.25 = 747 C; Paus. 7.10.2; Philostr. VA 1.23–24]; (6) The so-called *Anaspastoi* (the Resettled) were carried to islands in the Persian Gulf [Hdt. 3.93.2; 7.80.1]; (7) Mutilated Greeks (and Lycians) meet Alexander near Persepolis [Curt. 5.5.5–24; Diod. 17.69.2–9; Just. 11.14.11–12]; (8) Branchidae (from Didyma) are sent to eastern Iran [Curt. 7.5.28–35; Diod. 17, ep. 20; Strab. 11.11.4 = 518 C; Plut. mor. 557 B; Suda E 514 = Ael. frg. 57 Domingo-Forasté (54 Hercher)]¹; (9) Boeotians are sent to Media [Diod. 17.110.4–5]; (10) Prisoners from Sidon are sent to Babylon and Susa (346/5 BCE) [ABC 9]; (11) Jews are sent to Hyrcania [Eus. chron. 2.105; Hier. chron. a. Abr. Olymp. 105; Oros. Hist. 3.7.6–7; Sync. 1.486.14–17]; (12) Carians are sent to Borsippa [Arr. an. 3.8.5–7, 11.5].² Only one of

the cases, that of the Sidonians, is explicitly testified to by an oriental source (a Babylonian Chronicle); all the others are mentioned only in the Greco-Roman and Christian tradition. Whereas the genre of the Babylonian source and the information it contains about the Sidonian prisoners leave no doubt about the historicity and the procedure of deportation, each of the other cases is problematic due to its specific nature: (a) there are doubts about the historicity of a case (as in case 6, 7 or 11), e.g. because of the non-existence of a parallel tradition, (b) the number of alleged deportees appears clearly exaggerated (as in case 4).

It is owed to a lack of tradition, to coincidence, to the ignorance of our informants, and also often enough to their biases in cases where there is relevant information that other aspects of the deportation system ultimately remain undetermined: the criteria for the selection of the deportees (apart from political accountability and economic benefits [see below], i.e. factors such as age, disability, etc.), the execution of transporting the prisoners (measures to prevent their escape [bondage? branding?], means of ensuring supplies, transport, etc.), the possibility of ransom payments (like in Sasanian times, when it was an important source of stately income³), the exact procedure of defining the new settlement sites, etc.

These are not the only content-related and methodological problems associated with the sources: it is justified to assume that (former) deportees were members of the imperial or regional labor force and thus that they appear in the Achaemenid administrative texts from Persepolis (PFT and PTT) as receivers of rations, etc. As it is hardly possible to determine the legal and social status of these *kurtaš* in individual cases, it is also impossible to distinguish deportees and non-deportees within the group of individuals with foreign names. However, we should be highly skeptical about the western testimonies, for they tend to associate deportees with slaves too easily (see below).⁴ In this connection, a general warning must be given against following foreign (in this context Greco-Roman) concepts uncritically; instead, each case should be examined with the following questions in mind: to which genre does the text belong and what rules does this genre usually follow? Which intentions might the author of the text have pursued? What informants might he have had or what sources might he have used? What geographic knowledge (e.g. of the destination areas of the deportations) could he have possessed?

On the other hand, despite [the cases of] Miletus and Eretria, previous research has for a long time been guided by the unexamined assumption that the more “tolerant” Achaemenids followed a much milder deportation policy than the “brutal” Assyrians. We know that the Achaemenids as rulers followed Assyrian, Babylonian and Elamite models in many respects – not least in practical politics. However, the Persians had the great opportunity to draw lessons from the past, for example by using different forms of royal ideology and royal

representation or following different concepts of ethnicity (see below). But above all there is one thing we should not forget, namely that the Assyrians have left many more (eloquent but at the same time also quite tricky) testimonies on their deportations than the Persians.

Fundamentals of Achaemenid Deportation Practice

Of the deportation cases from Achaemenid time that have been handed down to us – Lydians in Nippur (cf. Dar. 351; UM 53,144) may refer to a deportation that had taken place already under Cyrus (after the rebellion of Pactyes?) – some belong to the “inter-state” sector; they are therefore legitimized by the law of the Persian victor in his fight against a foreign enemy (the cases 1.3.5.9). Others can be assigned to the domestic space (the cases 2.4.10.11); they are therefore part of an imperial response to a rebellion of “disloyal” subjects. In both cases, the punitive nature of the action is evident. The case of the Barcaeans (case 2), even if the historicity of the details is debatable, shows that in all likelihood it was not the main culprits who faced deportation but those less active. The main instigators were usually put to death (cf. also case 10) if they were not considered to be of special political value. Other cases (such as the cases 1 and 3) show that, in addition to the punitive principle, another reason for the deportation and resettlement of people must have been the exploitation of the deportees’ labor or their specific skills. In the case of the Milesians (case 4), the two principles probably came together: those who were responsible for the Ionian Revolt or collaborating with people involved in it were removed from the partially destroyed city, and professionals in naval affairs and trade were resettled in the Persian Gulf region.⁵

Although information on Persian deportations is almost exclusively handed down by Greco-Roman authors whose focus is understandably on Greek deportees, the procedure of a forced migration remains strangely vague – apart from the general horror of an impending enforced deportation.⁶ However, if we follow Herodotus, we can roughly distinguish five phases of a deportation: (1) the issuance and publication of a deportation order by the Great King (cf., e.g. 5.14), (2) the capture of a group of people and their preparation for the migration (cf., e.g. 6.119.1), (3) the deportation of the prisoners to the king (cf. 5.23.1), (4) the determination of new settlements for those deported by the Great King (cf., e.g. 4.204), (5) the transfer of the deportees to these settlements.

It is not least the Ancient Near Eastern model and the Babylonian and Persepolitan parallel tradition which suggest that after the migrants’ forced change of residence the imperial authorities took certain measures in order to

make the most effective use of the deportees' manpower. Further indications of this are the collective settlement of the exiles (in family and ethnic or regional contexts) in areas whose economic development (colonization, infrastructural measures) and/or military protection were reasonable (not least Bactria and the areas of the Persian Gulf); the authorities' consent to the preservation of the deportees' cultural traditions; and the overall good treatment of the deportees and their descendants, which promised economic and political benefits.⁷

As for the legal and social status of the deportees, it is important to state that on the one hand the Greek (cf. *doulos* or *andrapodon*) and Oriental (cf. *ardu*, *garda*, *kurtaš*) terminology is quite vague, and on the other hand modern categories are not always appropriate to describe ancient phenomena adequately. Despite the difficult demarcation between deportation and slavery,⁸ there is not much to be said for the assumption that the Persian deportees had the status of slaves if one considers the tasks assigned to them and their proper treatment.⁹ However, there is no doubt that the deportees were significantly restricted in their movement and freedom of action. About their relationship with the locals, we have hardly any information. The same holds true for the impact of deportations on the demographic, economic and political development of the regions where the migrants were settled. It also remains unclear whether descendants of deportees returned to their ancestral homes after the downfall of the Achaemenid Empire.

Deportations in the Assyrian and Persian Empires: A Comparison

This will not be a presentation of the far better testified Assyrian deportation practice. This has already been done by scholars more competent than the author of this article.¹⁰ What can and should be tried here, is to designate the aspects of the Persian deportation system that distinguish it from the Assyrian one – at least according to ancient tradition. First, there is so far no indication that the Persian kings deported entire peoples and settled other populations within the emptied territories, like later rulers of the Assyrians claimed to have done. Recent studies have demonstrated that the Persians normally deported only manageable groups of no more than a few hundred people at most. If Herodotus speaks of the depopulation of the Polis area in the case of Miletus (6.19.2–20.1), or if he makes Histiaeus warn against a threatening population exchange in the case of Ionia (6.3), then it is not his intention to reflect reality. In the first case, he wants to let the conquest of Miletus appear as a turning point in Ionian history, in the second, he seeks to illustrate the problematic personality of the former tyrant of Miletus. However, we can neither be

completely sure that the Assyrian mass deportations were not first of all an ideological phenomenon – meant to underline the power of the Assyrian king – or, if historical, due to the enormous scale of the Assyrian building and infrastructure projects and the kings' high demand for skilled and low-skilled labor. Nor do we know anything – due to the lack of oriental sources – about Persian deportation policy in other than the western parts of their empire.

The Assyrian policy of “Assyrianization”¹¹ finds no equivalent on the Persian side.¹² Nevertheless, the Achaemenids maintained forced migration as a political means, and they also followed the respective goals of their Assyrian precursors: deportations served the punishment of rebels (and their followers), whilst at the same time fostering colonization in selected territories of the empire and the protection and stabilization of peripheral or strategically important regions as well as meeting labor demand.

NOTES

- 1 Müller (2014): p. 184.
- 2 Cf. Waerzeggers (2006).
- 3 Cf. ŠKZ pal 8, grI 8; Proc. bell. 2.5.29–30, 13.2–6. For the better-documented Parthian and Sasanian deportations see the excellent article by Kettenhofen (1994).
- 4 Cf. Rollinger (2019).
- 5 In Herodotus (see e.g. 6.20, 119.2), this utilitarian idea is sometimes connected with the information that (seeing the deportees) “King Darius did them no further harm.”
- 6 Philostratus' note (VA 1.24) that only 410 out of 780 deportees arrived at their destination Ardericca alive is hardly trustworthy in view of the author and his work.
- 7 The fact that in the reports of the Alexander historians the Macedonian king is said to have met mutilated former deportees and acted as their avenger (case 7) is explained by the authors' intention to evoke the crimes of the Persians and to let Alexander act as their rewarder.
- 8 Kehne (2006).
- 9 “It is understandable, however, that the Greeks equaled (!) ‘enslaving’ and ‘deportation’. They saw their compatriots disappear to unknown provinces of the Persian empire, without knowing what happened to them. Because the Greeks had the custom to enslave their prisoners of war, they believed that the Persians had done the same. Besides, the deportations showed the power of the great king, who could treat his people at will, as one does with slaves” (van der Spek 2014: p. 258).
- 10 See Oded (1979); Mayer (2004). Cf. also Radner (2012).
- 11 Fales (2009–2010): p. 204: “Summing up, I would like to single out the fact that the comprehensive profile of the ‘Assyrians’, as variously portended in the sources of the NA period, manages to blend two elements which might seem at first sight contradictory. These are: (1) a decided pride/relish in inborn/inbred

group particularities, i.e. in all those features – from birthright to exclusiveness in world-view to dominance of (or security within) their own land, down to a ‘native’ manufacturing tradition – which made ‘Assyrians’ feel different from, and in fact superior on, the outer world in their ethnicity, and (2) a continuously proactive (and ultimately optimistic) impulse to expand ‘Assyrian-ness’ through the addition of external personnel to the commonwealth, granting to it the basic rights (mainly personal obligations) tied to Assyrian ethnicity itself, despite the unavoidable mutations in the overall cultural buildup of the empire that this operation could risk entailing.”

12 Briant (1988); Wiesehöfer (2015).

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FURTHER READING

Apart from the dissertation of Matarese (2021) and the article of van der Spek (2014), it is really worthwhile to read the contributions of Kehne (2006 and 2009), not least for methodological reasons.

SECTION VI.B

LOCAL ADMINISTRATION

CHAPTER 62

Persia

Wouter F.M. Henkelman

Introduction

Two predominantly Elamite archives found at Persepolis are the prime source for the local administration of the Achaemenid heartland per se as well as for the backbone for any socioeconomic history of the empire at large. The survey offered here centers on administrative structures, hierarchies, and protocols in relation with other textual sources; it is supplemented by another survey (Henkelman 2013b), focusing on find circumstances, formal characteristics, and connections with archeological discoveries (other surveys: Cahill 1985; Briant 2002: pp. 422–471; Henkelman 2008b: pp. 65–179, 2013a; Azzoni et al. 2017; Garrison 2017: pp. 15–116; cf. Kuhrt 2007: pp. 763–825).

Archives from Persepolis

The Persepolis Fortification Archive (PFA) was discovered in March 1933 as part of the northeastern fortification system was cleared in order to provide an exit for the debris removed from the Persepolis terrace. The tablets were reportedly excavated in two small spaces near an interior staircase in the casemate wall where they must have been stored in antiquity (Dusinberre 2005: pp. 150–161; Henkelman 2008b: pp. 69–71, 162–171; Razmjou 2008: pp. 51–55).

A first report assumed more than 30 000 tablets and fragments altogether (Anonymous [Herzfeld] 1934: pp. 231–232). Current estimates hold that tablets and fragments written in Elamite stem from 15 000 or more original tablets. Of these, at least 7000 are legible and analytically meaningful (Henkelman 2008b: pp. 79–82, 177–179; Jones and Stolper 2008). In addition, there are about 840 monolingual Aramaic tablets and 250 or more Aramaic epigraphs on Elamite tablets (Azzoni 2008; Azzoni and Stolper 2015). Single tablets in Greek, Old Persian, Phrygian, and two or three in Demotic belong to the same bureaucratic system; an Akkadian text may be intrusive (Stolper and Tavernier 2007; Azzoni et al. 2019). Finally, the PFA includes up to 5000 uninscribed tablets with impressions of one or more seals (Garrison 2008, 2017: pp. 45–49). Most Aramaic and Elamite tablets are also sealed. More than 4000 discrete, legible seals have to date been identified from impressions in the archive.

After their discovery, the Fortification tablets were shipped to the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago. Three batches of Elamite and uninscribed tablets, as well as a large group of small fragments, were returned to the National Museum of Iran in 1948 (153 Elam., 23 uninstr.), 1951 (fragments; Razmjou 2004), 2004 (300 Elam.; Stein 2004), and 2019 (1783 Elam.; Nokandeh and Woods 2019). More than 2400 Elamite texts have been published, including a group of 12 unprovenanced texts that probably stems from the PFA (Henkelman 2008b: p. 77; cf. Henkelman et al. 2006). Sigla used for the Elamite texts are PF (Hallock 1969), PFa (Hallock 1978), PF-NN (see Henkelman 2013b), Fort. and Teh. (167 in Arfaee 2008a). Translations of 12 Aramaic texts (PFAT) are given in Azzoni and Dusingberre 2014 (cf. Chapter 9 Aramaic Sources). For seals on the uninscribed (PFUT) and other tablets, see Chapter 56 Seals and Sealing.

The following is largely based on the Elamite texts, which hitherto have received most attention. Edited texts date between April 509 BCE and April/March 493 BCE (Darius I, 13–28); a few earlier and later texts are known, however (Stolper forthcoming). They document the intake, storage, and distribution of crops, livestock, and food products such as wine, beer, and cheese, but the main thrust is on allocations: fodder for animals, base rations and bonuses for teams of dependent workers, daily meals for travelers on official missions, wages for officials, allowances for nobles and royals, and offerings for the gods.

The Persepolis Treasury Archive (PTA) was excavated in 1936–1938 CE in a series of rooms of the Treasury building in the southeastern section of the Persepolis terrace. It comprises 746 tablets and fragments, of which 138 Elamite tablets, one Akkadian text (Cameron 1948, 1958, 1965; Arfa'i 2008b; Jones and Yie 2011), 199 uninscribed sealed clay bullae and tongue-shaped anepigraphic tablets (Schmidt 1957: pp. 4–41, Pls. 2–14; cf. Chapter 56 Seals and Sealing) are published.

The PTA deals with (partial) payments in silver in lieu of, or in addition to, food rations. It represents a branch of administration subordinated to that documented by the PFA. Most Elamite PTA texts date between May/June 492 BCE and January 457 BCE (Darius I, year 30 to Artaxerxes I, year 7), but a few texts belong to the middle years of Darius I (Henkelman forthcoming). The Akkadian text dates to 502 BCE (and deals with taxation). That the PTA partly overlaps with PFA shows that there was no change in administrative procedure or payment practice, but rather operations co-existing within the same overall structure.

Elamite texts (PT) in the PTA are records of single transactions (“memoranda”) and letter-orders, both written on tongue-shaped tablets. These were formed around a knotted string, the ends of which protruded from the flattened left edge. The PFA also largely consists of such tablets but additionally includes rectangular registers (“journals”), accounts, and other document types in various layouts and formats, illustrating a complicated yet apparently well-functioning machinery (Henkelman 2008b: pp. 95–109, 126–162, 2013b; Garrison and Henkelman 2020a).

Both the PFA and the PTA are fragments of much larger archives; they also represent just two branches of administration and not even all layers within those branches (as comparison with the Aramaic archive from Bactria reveals; cf. Naveh and Shaked 2012; see Chapter 66 Bactria). One may assume other documentation dealing with, for example, wool and textile production (Henkelman 2011a: p. 3). Taxation is visible in the PFA but only very partially (Tuplin 2008: pp. 326–386), regulation of markets, fishing, and hunting rights, etc. not at all.

Some 60 sealed bullae and clay tags as well as three cylinder seals were excavated in a tower of the Mountain Fortification on the Šāhi Kūh east of the Persepolis terrace (Tadjvidi 1970, 1973, 1976; Rahimifar 2005). Some of these resemble uninscribed PFA and PTA tablets, others PTA bullae and similar objects from Achaemenid Anatolia, Bactria, and Egypt. The bullae probably sealed Aramaic documents on leather; like the tags, they were part of an archival system (refs. in Henkelman 2013b; see Chapter 65 Asia Minor).

Seals constituted a “language” of its own in administrative, bureaucratic, and archival procedures. Even the Mountain Fortification bullae, presumably once attached to Aramaic documents, thus constitute a multilingual corpus. This is *a fortiori* true for the PFA where interaction of Elamite and Aramaic is a regular feature (Tavernier 2008). Also, most PFA/PTA scribes did not have Elamite or Aramaic but Old Iranian as their first language (cf. Chapter 7 Elamite Sources).

Like the uninscribed tablets and bullae, the Elamite PFA/PTA tablets are part of a larger mosaic of sources. Two administrative texts in Achaemenid Elamite and a small series of uninscribed tablets and bullae attest to the

existence of a sister archive at Susa (see Henkelman 2008b: pp. 78–79, 110–115, 2012a: p. 954). An Elamite and an uninscribed tablet from Čoḡā Miš possibly belong to this Susa-centered administration of Achaemenid Khūzestān (Henkelman 2012a: p. 960). The find of an Elamite account text (and two smaller fragments) at Old Qandahār implies a Persepolis-like provincial administration in Afghanistan (Fisher and Stolper 2015; Henkelman 2017: pp. 150–174). Internal evidence from the PFA furthermore points to administrative centers at Ecbatana, Gabae (Īzadkhašt or Ābādeh area), and Taoce (Borāzḡān area; Henkelman 2008a, 2010: pp. 696–697, 714 n. 174). In other words, Achaemenid administrations using Elamite records may have covered the entire Iranian plateau. On an even larger scale, the PFA/PTA are part of an empire-wide network of administrative sources that betray, by protocols, hierarchies, structures, and terminology, the same imperial signature (Henkelman 2017). The Aramaic documents from Bactria (Naveh and Shaked 2012; cf. Chapter 66 Bactria) deserve special mention here as their contents can be very fruitfully compared to the Persepolis archives (Briant 2009: esp. pp. 148–151, 2020). The PFA and PTA, then, have implications stretching far beyond Persepolis.

From Umḥulumāʾ to Parnakka

Though the administration of Achaemenid Persia is best documented for the reign of Darius I, its structures were in place or being developed under his predecessors and in some cases went back to the Elamite past.

A letter (ABL 281, c. 650 BCE) by general Bēl-ibni to Assurbanipal describes a palace-centered institutional economy as characteristic for the Neo-Elamite state: grain from all Elam was centrally collected under directorship of one Umḥulumāʾ, put at the disposal of agents of the crown, and distributed to groups of dependent workers (Stolper 1978; cf. Basello 2011). The same traditional system is found at Persepolis more than a century later: The PFA describes a centralized (yet not all-embracing) institutional economy under directorship of Parnakka. It had thousands of dependent workers known as *kurtaš* (Old Persian **gr̥da-*), a word originally used for “domestic (servant)” (for all reconstructed Old Iranian forms cited hereafter see Tavernier 2007a). Evidencing the imperial leap taken since 550 BCE, the status of these dependent workers was redefined to include people from all over the empire; they worked in a large-scale and developed version of the Neo-Elamite redistributive palace economy.

Comparable groups of foreign workers are mentioned in three texts from early Achaemenid Babylonia. Two, from the reign of Cyrus, refer to groups of workers sent to Taḥ(u)makka, i.e. Tamukkan/Taoce (cf. above). They attest

to the creation of a palatial and administrative center in the Borāzġān area, where a cluster of early Achaemenid sites has been uncovered, but also, by implication, to the logistical apparatus needed for it (Tolini 2008; Henkelman 2008a, 2012a: pp. 939–940, 2017: pp. 135–144). The same holds true for the construction of Pasargadae. A third text, from in the reign of Cambyses, deals with workers sent to build a palace at Matannan in the imperial heartland (Henkelman and Kleber 2007).

Another clue for early Achaemenid administrative centers is found in Naširma/P(a)išiyauvādā, a locality to which two “rebels” in the Persian heartland, Gaumāta and Vahyazdāta, were connected (DB_e I.28, III.13). In the PFA, it appears as an important military stronghold (Wiesehöfer 1978: pp. 51–54; Henkelman 2017: pp. 49–54; compare also Nupištaš/*Nipišta-, “Writings,” i.e. where writings were kept).

From Rām Hormoz to Nīrīz

In bureaucratic usage, the name of the heartland doubled as that of its center: Pārsa. The same is true for, e.g., Karmāna- (Carmania). In vernacular use, Persians may have rendered the name unambiguous by adding a word for center or residence; this could underlie explicit designations such as Κάρμανα μητρόπολις and Κάρμανα τὸ βασιλείον (Ptol. *Geogr.* 6.8.13, 8.22.20). Greek Περσέπολις should similarly be understood as “Pārsa-the-City” (not: “City of the Persians”).

The area under purview of the Persepolis administration was roughly located between Rām Hormoz or Behbahān in the northwest and Nīrīz in the southeast (Arfaee 1999; Henkelman 2008b: pp. 110–117). It was divided into at least three districts defined by the use of “regional seals” (collocated with a wide range of toponyms). They are the Persepolis (southeast), Kāmfirūz (center), and Fahliyān (northwest) regions (Henkelman 2008b: pp. 118–120, 131–134). Whereas the PFA documents all three, the PTA pertains only to the Persepolis region. This, and the fact that it does not contain documents representing higher bureaucratic levels (journals, accounts, Aramaic texts), characterizes the PTA as a subordinate, regional archive.

Two outlying areas mentioned in the PFA were perhaps under less direct control of Persepolis. They were centered on Tamukkan/Taoce and Kabaš/Gabae (cf. above), places that, according to Strabo (15.3.3), had βασιλεία, “royal residences” or “royal centers,” suggesting their administrative role. Simultaneously, the apparent absence of officials issuing travel authorizations at Tamukkan and Kabaš may indicate a subordinate position (Henkelman 2008a). Arrian relates the appointment, by Alexander, of a satrap over the Paraetaceni (*Anab.* 3.19.2;

cf. Jacobs 1994: p. 182), whose territory bordered on Gabiene (Diod. 19.34.7), but it is unclear whether this was a new arrangement. Classical sources also refer to governors of Larestān and the islands in the Persian Gulf, but their rank remains unclear (Potts 2020; Henkelman 2017: pp. 49–54 with n. 8).

In size, the territory of the Persepolis institutional economy roughly matches that of modern-day Switzerland. This comparison also underlines the vertical organization of the landscape (cf. Strabo 15.3.1; Arr. *Ind.* 40.2–4). Lower valleys and larger intermontane plains were fully integrated in the institutional sphere. Higher altitudes, especially fit for summer pasture, fell outside the direct control of Persepolis, though contacts and exchanges with, presumably, (agro-)pastoralist groups are implied (Henkelman 2005).

Classical sources similarly describe the heartland as including semi-autonomous pastoralist tribes such as the Ouxioi “of the mountains.” Such groups were indeed integrated in the socio-political landscape of the Achaemenid Empire, yet by different bonds of loyalty (Briant 1982a: pp. 57–112; Henkelman 2011a). For this reason it is unsurprising that several tribal groups, in and outside Pārsa, had their own satrap. Depending on the level of control, such an official may be likened to a tribal chief under state recognition (cf. Rowton 1976) or an external tribal commissioner. Satraps of the Ouxioi (Fahliyān region?) and Oreitai (Bašākerd area southeast of Bandar-e ‘Abbās?) are known from the time of Darius III (Curt. 5.3.4; Arr. *Anab.* 6.22.2; cf. Henkelman 2011a: pp. 6–11 and above on the Paraetaceni) and there is a hint that the Tapyroi had their own administrator at the time of Darius I (Henkelman 2011a: p. 16). When a sudden power vacuum occurred in Pārsa in 325 BCE, Orxines, tribal leader (or satrap?) of the Pasargadae and “descendant of Cyrus” (Curt. 4.12.8), assumed the office of satrap of Pārsa (Curt. 10.1.22–38; Arr. *Anab.* 6.29.2; cf. Briant 1990: pp. 77–79).

The existence of tribal satraps once again underlines that satraps were not merely “governors” of a given province but in the first place individual agents of the crown empowered with varying jurisdictions and ranks (Briant 2002: pp. 65–67; Stolper 2006: pp. 227–228, 241; Henkelman 2010: pp. 712–713). This is also illustrated by the case of Karkiš, satrap of Carmania (including Gedrosia), who issued travel authorizations from the province’s administrative center, but was also found in Pārsa, moving through the countryside with armed contingents or on official missions. Karkiš was furthermore strongly connected with P(a)išiyauvādā in the southwestern heartland (Henkelman 2012b, 2017: p. 52 n. 8; cf. above). When in Pārsa, he could draw on the reserves of the Persepolis economy to have his own “table” (cf. below), demonstrating a recognition of his status of satrap even when outside Carmania. Though it possibly indicates a hierarchy of administrative units (Jacobs 1994: pp. 195–206), this profile in the first place demonstrates the satrap’s authority regardless of his territorial assignment.

From Parnakka to Peucestes

There are no native sources describing the hierarchy and structure of the heartland government. The Persepolis archives offer some insights, but almost grudgingly, and yield more meaning only when confronted with other sources, notably the Alexander biographies.

At the time of Darius III, Ariobarzanes acted as satrap of Pārsa (Arr. *Anab.* 3.18.2). Alexander replaced him with Phrasaortes (ib. 3.18.11), later succeeded by Orxines (cf. above) and then by Peucestes (Arr. *Anab.* 6.28.3; Diod. 19.14.4–5). The latter, well-acquainted with Persian traditions, organized a sacrificial banquet at Persepolis in 316 BCE that in its setup recalls the grand sacrifices presided over by institutional director Parnakka (*Farnaka-) under Darius I (see Chapter 86 Practice of Worship in the Achaemenid Heartland §8). The logistic apparatus required for Peucestes' feast puts him squarely in the position earlier occupied by Parnakka (Henkelman 2011b: pp. 115–117).

Who was this Parnakka? We know that in 500 BCE he commissioned a spectacular, baroque seal (Garrison 1991: pp. 9–10) with an Aramaic inscription identifying him as son of Aršāma (Arsames). The seal and its inscription do not necessarily make him Darius' uncle (Henkelman 2010: p. 733), but certainly place him in the upper echelons of Persian nobility.

From an institutional perspective, Parnakka appears to be the king's highest representative in Pārsa. His administrative duties seem broadly comparable to those of Umḥulumā' in Elam. Parnakka was assisted by Ziššawiš (*Čiçava(h)uš), authorized to perform all the director's tasks, including the cultic ones. A comparable Susa team, Bakabana (*Bakapāna-) and his lieutenant Mardunda (Mardontes, *Vṛdvanta-), is referred to in the PFA. But whereas scholarship has readily identified Bakabana as satrap in Elam, no such agreement exists on Parnakka.

Admittedly, there are a few individuals receiving higher daily allowances than Parnakka, notably Gobryas (Hinz 1970: p. 424; Lewis 1985: pp. 110–111). Yet, even if Gobryas was the highest military authority, he was not integrated in the *institutional* hierarchy (cf. below) and, seen from the archive, he does not appear as an overarching heartland administrator. The same is true for individuals with the designation *daubattiš* (**dahyupatiš*; e.g. PF 1250), lit. "land-controller," hence perhaps "governor." These occur in contexts suggesting a relatively high rank, but not that of satrap (cf. *bēl pīḫāti* in Neo-Babylonian).

Parnakka, like Bakabana at Susa, issues travel authorizations and regularly occurs as destination or point of departure of official journeys (see Chapter 56 Seals and Sealing). Three officials with the same profile, yet at other locations, may be compared. They are all mentioned in the PFA. Irdapirna (*Rtafarnā-; Artaphernes) at Sardes/Lydia is also known, from Herodotus (5.25), as that

region's hyparch, viz the satrap or at any rate highest political authority. Parindadda (*Farndāta-) presumably is the same as Pherendates, "to whom Egypt is entrusted," i.e. the satrap, in Demotic letters from 493 to 492 BCE (Schmitt 1988: pp. 82–84; Chauveau 1999; Martin 2011: C1, C3). Karkiš (*Karkiš; Gergis), in Carmania, is actually referred to as "satrap" in the PFA (Henkelman 2010: pp. 704–713, 733–734). Greek sources furthermore underline that travel authorizations were issued on satrapal level (Briant 1991: pp. 70–72, 2002: pp. 364–368). So, though his designation is never made explicit, and though most commentators are disinclined to identify him as such (see e.g. Lewis 1977: p. 9; Briant 2002: pp. 467–469), it would appear that Parnakka was satrap of Pārsa or had a comparable rank, making him a predecessor of Ariobarzanes and Peucestes.

One more immediate successor of Parnakka as head of the Persepolis economy, manager of the king's estate, and representative of the king was Ašbazana (Aspačanā, Aspathines; attested 494–483 BCE). He is presumably the same as Aspačanā described as *vaṣabara* (lit. "garment-bearer") and depicted with a ceremonial hammer/axe on Darius' tomb at Naqš-e Rostam (DNd). It has been argued that his title and insignium were expressions of Aspačanā's office (Garrison 1998; Henkelman 2003: pp. 117–126). Parnakka may have had the same prerogatives. Whether he was a satrap effectively becomes irrelevant in view of the evident prestige of this office, the incumbent of which invariably occurs, standing behind the throne, in royal audience scenes.

Those same audience scenes show another official approaching the king, usually seen as chiliarch or **hazahrapati-*, literally "commander of thousand" (see Briant 2002: pp. 222, 258–259). An earlier identification of Parnakka (and his successors) with this court official mainly rests on an ill-founded understanding of the function of the chiliarch as head of the royal *chancellery* (Junge 1940; Hinz 1969: pp. 63–68, 1970: p. 425). Whereas the chiliarch had an aulic function that required his attendance, Parnakka's responsibilities clearly did not imply his constant presence at the court (Henkelman 2010: p. 670 n. 11). He was not a "Hofmarschall" (even if understood as royal commissioner) but an official with much broader responsibilities, including control of the road network in his region.

As head of the institution documented by the PFA, Parnakka was ultimately responsible for the entire redistribution system and myriad dependent workers active in the heartland. At the same time, he took direct orders from Darius regarding his "house" (Elamite *ulhi*), viz the entirety of assets, people, animals, and operations at the personal disposal of the King of Kings. In the PFA, the qualification "of the king, royal" (*sunkina*) refers to this entity, which apparently could be distinguished from the general institutional sphere. Similarly, the early Hellenistic text known as Pseudo-Aristotle's *Oeconomica* (2.1.2–3/1345b) describes the royal *oikos* as a separate economic sphere with

its own sources of income. Yet, the label “royal” is not applied systematically in the PFA; the demarcation between royal and public spheres could be hazy. This is readily apparent from Parnakka’s double function as director of the public and royal sectors of the heartland economy and may be further illustrated by the example of poultry, which was bred, fed, and inventorized within the institution’s general sphere but only consumed at the court (Briant 2002: pp. 463–471, 2006; Descat 2006: pp. 368–371; Henkelman 2008b: pp. 417–424, 2010: pp. 667–675).

The internal hierarchy and administrative structure of the royal household remains largely invisible in the PFA. With the exception of Parnakka and a few other officials, royal stewards and personnel stationed in Pārsa typically remain outside the archive’s scope. The same applies to the administrative apparatus of the mobile court, which linked up with local administrations at Persepolis, Susa, and elsewhere when the king resided there. Royal commissioners responsible for the royal table sealed receipts for, e.g., poultry, but do not otherwise appear in the PFA. The situation is different for the households of the royal women Irdabama, Udusa (Atossa), and Irtašduna (Artystone). Letter-orders and other documents pertaining to their domains, workforces, and staff are part of the archive, suggesting a higher degree of integration (Garrison 1996; Henkelman 2010; Stolper 2018).

To return to Parnakka: One thing that is eminently clear from his double position is that he was first and foremost a representative of *royal* authority. This also appears from his supervision of the organization of sacrificial feasts at Persepolis, Pasargadae, and other royal places over which he personally presided as the king’s highest representative (Henkelman 2011b; see Chapter 73 Banquet and Gift Exchange).

Parnakka’s daily allocation (2 sheep/goats, 901 wine/beer, 1801 flour; Koch 1983: p. 45; Hallock 1985: pp. 589–590) was primarily a recognition of his status rather than a real salary. The Fortification tablets fail to mention that commodities were consumed “before” Parnakka, as they do in the case of the Table of the King, that of Irdabama, Irtašduna, and Udusa, and that of the satrap Karkiš. Be that as it may, the amounts allocated allowed Parnakka to wine and dine and receive guests in a style befitting the king’s representative. They imply an entourage of up to 100 people, who would have followed Parnakka on his regular tours through Pārsa. These tours were meant for inspection and the settling of administrative issues, but also made royal authority tangible (cf. Ps.Arist. *Oec.* 2.2.14 on the tours of Mausolus’ hyparch). They were surely organized with appropriate splendor (cf. Herzfeld 1926: pp. 247–248 on a later parallel), plausibly involving royal parks and/or “pavilions” as stopovers (see Chapter 53 Roads and Communication).

Parnakka also had a professional staff (receiving separate rations) comprising 300 aides, teams of scribes writing Aramaic and Elamite, and subordinate

officers such as his *daddabarra* (**dātabara*-), “judge, legate,” Bakabada (Stolper 1985: pp. 63, 91; Briant 2002: pp. 468, 510–511; Henkelman 2003: pp. 134–135). The phrase used here, “judge of PN,” recurs in later Achaemenid Babylonia, where the superiors mentioned are satraps and an Achaemenid queen (Stolper 2006: pp. 230–231).

Letter-orders from the office of the (deputy-)director were drafted in Aramaic and, if sent into the institution’s middle and lower spheres, translated into Elamite. Such documents typically pertain to rations issued in irregular contexts; normally, rosters, and standing orders would do the job. Higher-level documents, such as travel authorizations, correspondence with leading officials and the court, were in Aramaic only. With the original letter-orders, they made out a now-lost director’s archive, similar to that from Achaemenid Bactria (Naveh and Shaked 2012; see Chapter 66 Bactria).

Parnakka left office sometime in 497/96 BCE; a text from 494/93 BCE refers to him as person from the past (NN 2512). Koch tentatively reconstructed a succession of subsequent directors (1990: pp. 218–235, 1993: pp. 62–63; cf. Hinz 1971: pp. 302–308; Hallock 1985: p. 590; Henkelman 2008b: p. 127 n. 283), arguing that Irdumartiya (Aṛtavardiya-) took over, but only for a short while, to be replaced by Ašbazana in 494/93 BCE. While this assessment appears to be correct, the main period of Irdumartiya’s directorship was prior to Parnakka’s term (Henkelman forthcoming). Directors after Ašbazana may have been Irdatakma (**Ṛtātaxma*-), probably in function until 466 BCE, and Irdašura (**Ṛtāθūra*-).

Treasurers and Commanders

At Susa, Alexander made four important (re)appointments, presumably continuing an existing configuration: Abulites as satrap, Mazarus/Xenophilus as citadel commander, Archelaus as *strategos*, and Callicrates as treasurer (Arr. *Anab.* 3.16.9; Curt. 5.2.16–17). The situation in Pārsa is less clear (Jacobs 1994: pp. 68–69; Briant 2002: pp. 736–737, 850–851). Apart from the satrap, there is mention of a Persian named Gobares, *praefectus* of Pasargadae (Curt. 5.6.10), and, at Persepolis, the appointment of Nicarchides as citadel commander and the reappointment of Tiridates, the *custos pecuniae regis*, who was apparently (temporarily) also in charge of Persepolis (Curt. 5.5.2, 6.11; Diod. 17.69.1). Though Curtius’ description seemingly points to the king’s privy purse, the context suggest that Tiridates was in fact the central treasurer (cf. 5.6.11). It would thus seem that Pārsa under Darius III had an administrative leadership comparable to that of the satrapy of Elam, including satrap, treasurer, and garrison commander. This agrees with the physical layout of the two centers, which boasted treasury buildings (Hdt. 5.49; Strabo 15.3.21) and extensive citadels.

Military leaders are elusive in the Persepolis archives. Hinz took *pirratamma* (**fratama*-), occurring in the PTA with Bagadadda and Mirampa, to mean “general” (Hinz 1971: p. 130), but the contexts do not support this and the designation itself (lit. “foremost”) probably means nothing but “director” (cf. Tuplin 2005). The aforementioned Gobryas is described in Naqš-e Rostam as the king’s lance-bearer (DNc); by analogy with Aspathines, this title may have been the prerogative of his office. Hinz suggested that Gobryas might be garrison commander at Persepolis and Parnakka’s superior (1971: pp. 301). A Gobryas indeed appears as Darius’ general in the Bīsotūn inscription (§71) and a Gobryas in the PFA receives daily allowances higher than those of Parnakka. But the PFA contexts are non-military and Gobryas needed a counter-seal from a storekeeper when sealing receipts. This forcefully indicates that Gobryas, regardless of his high status as nobleman, courtier, and tribal leader of Patischorians, was not fully integrated in the administrative system – in bureaucratic terms, he was a highly-honored outsider (similarly Garrison 2017: p. 64). By contrast, the satrap Karkiš, when moving with troops through Pārsa, sealed without counter-seal (like other high officials and royalty) and had executive power within the sphere monitored by the PFA. Unfortunately, the nature of his military assignment remains elusive (but see Lewis 1985: pp. 113–114 on Gergis), as are the dealings of the armed forces in general. They may have had their own administrative and logistic apparatus, like the Elephantine garrison, and may have fallen directly under royal authority (Xen. *Cyr.* 8.6.9; cf. Tuplin 1987b, 2010: pp. 128–138 [horses/cavalry]; Briant 2002: pp. 340–343 [garrison commanders vs. satraps]; Henkelman 2002 [lance-bearers], 2008b: pp. 151–152 [fortress commanders]).

Though Elamite *kapnuškira* usually denotes “treasurer,” its plural, *kapnuškip*, describes craftsmen and workers at local, factory-like facilities (*kapnuški*) that manufactured leather, wood, stone, and other products (Hinz 1971: pp. 265–269; Koch 1981; Kawase 1986; Tuplin 1987a: pp. 129–131). Some *kapnuškip*, notably the *ullira* (lit. “delivery-person”) and the treasury scribes, received relatively high rations (Koch 1983: p. 41; cf. Tavernier 2007b and compare Xen. *Anab.* 1.2.20; Hdt. 3.128.3). Craft centers known as treasuries are also attested in Achaemenid Arachosia and Egypt (Briant 2002: pp. 450–451; Henkelman 2017: pp. 97–109; King 2019).

In the PTA, Baradkama (*Baratkāma-) bears the designation *kapnuškira* or its Iranian equivalent *kanzabara* (**ganzabara*-); sometimes he is called “treasurer (at) Pārsa.” He is explicitly attested as treasurer in 490–480 BCE, but occurs as *šaramanna* official since 495 BCE, perhaps indicating that he was already *kapnuškira* by then (cf. below). Letters to and from Baradkama show that he was subordinated to the general director Ašbazana and his deputy; he himself supervised Šakka (*Saka-), the paymaster who issued silver to workers. Later treasurers were Mauš (*Vauš), Ratinda/Uratinda (*Vratēnta-), and

Barišša (*Pārsa-). They are known as treasurer in 473–466, 466, and 458 BCE respectively, but occur as *šaramanna* officials during longer periods (Hallock 1960: pp. 90–91; Hinz 1971: pp. 262–264).

Classical reports on silver hoarded at Persepolis and other residences (Diod. 17.71.1–2, Curt. 5.6.9–10) as well as occasional PFA texts on silver, taxes, or “treasures” transported from Arachosia, Babylon, Kermān, and elsewhere to Persepolis or Susa (Henkelman 2017: pp. 97–99 with n. 75; cf. Briant 2002: pp. 462–463; Tamerus 2016), suggest wide responsibilities for the treasurers at those locations. The role of Tiridates, in charge of Persepolis as Alexander approached, confirms their high status, as does documentation on the estate(s) of Bagasāru and other Babylonian treasurers (Dandamaev 1968; Stolper 2000). The PTA is lopsided in that it documents small silver payments, mostly to dependent workers. The archives do, however, provide supplementary evidence on the treasurers’ administrative responsibilities.

Institutional Hierarchy

Most PFA/PTA documents are descriptive; apart from letter-orders and a few other texts, we lack prescriptive documents such as rosters of workmen, work assignments, and contracts with external herdsmen (Garrison and Henkelman 2020a: pp. 179–182). This limits the view of the administrative process and, particularly, the institutional hierarchy. The basic layout of the system is nevertheless clear: In what Aperghis (1999) has dubbed “matrix management,” officials responsible for logistics and rationing collaborated with officials responsible for the intake, storage, and issuing of commodities. The second group had an internal hierarchy, with local storekeepers and district supply officials directing a number of storehouses. Ration officials similarly occur in various ranks.

Receipts for commodities for work teams reflect the shared responsibility and mutual control: They are typically sealed by the supply official or storekeeper and by the responsible ration official. Only the highest labor officials had overarching authority and sealed alone, according to the single-seal protocol (Aperghis 1999; cf. Hallock 1985: pp. 592–600; Henkelman 2008b: pp. 126–129). More generally, ration officials seem to have had precedence over the supply officials/storekeepers, once again demonstrating the labor-oriented perspective of the archives. These different statuses are also reflected in glyptic: most lower storekeepers have inconspicuous seals. Seals of more important supply officials tend to have distinctive compositional features and are often readily identifiable, even in partial impression. Top-end seals carved in the court style or in an archaizing modeled style, and/or exhibiting court-related iconography, are attested for the more important ration officers (M.B. Garrison, pers. comm.).

Among the more than 700 known storekeepers/suppliers, the higher-ranking ones could be active in several places, could be associated with several seals, and could have several subalterns with specific tasks and designations. Such teams could operate under a single seal, whereby the seal expressed the jurisdiction and the personal name on the tablet of the accountable official. Supplier seals occur relatively often on uninscribed tablets, suggesting particular bureaucratic practices (Aperghis 1999: pp. 155–161; Garrison 2014; Garrison and Henkelman 2020a). Finally, it should be noted that ration officers themselves sometimes took charge of the distribution of commodities at their disposal and thus appear in the texts in the role of supplier.

Ration officers are recognizable by the terms *šaramanna* and *damanna*, both probably fossilized supines. The root *šara-* (perhaps “to cut off, to divide, to apportion”) originally referred to the act of allocating rations to dependent workers (“[whose rations are for] PN to apportion”) and as such came to denote the *responsibility* for organizing and remunerating labor (Hallock 1965; Stolper 1978; cf. Henkelman 2008b: p. 128 n. 285; Garrison and Henkelman 2020a: pp. 183–187). The *pitipabaga* (**piθfabaga-*, “distributor of rations”) and *ptpkn* (**piθfakāna-*, “provider of rations”) in some Babylonian and Aramaic texts may be compared (Stolper 1985: pp. 55–59; Naveh and Shaked 2012: p. 55; cf. Lenfant 2009: pp. 106–115 [ποτιβαζις]).

The root *da-* (“to send, to put”) refers to assigning workers to a particular activity (Hallock 1969: pp. 27–28). *Damanna* (“[whose work is for] PN to assign”) can be used in similar contexts as *šaramanna*, and sometimes served as its equivalent in denoting responsibility for labor. It occurs with Parnakka and his lieutenant, in which case it often qualifies scribes attached to the directorship. Otherwise, a *damanna* official is subordinate to a *šaramanna* official. Thus Bakabad(d)a the *sadabattiš* (**θatapatiš*), “centurion,” directed workers under responsibility of a *šaramanna* official (PF 1842, PF 1843, NN 0502). Such centurions could nevertheless have a middle-rank status, as appears from their rations (PT 1, PT 24; cf. Briant 2002: p. 431). The terms “centurion”, *dasabattiš* (**daθapatiš*), “decurion,” *bašzadasabattiš* (**pašča-daθapatiš*), “vice-decurion,” and *zatturrubattiš* (**čaθrupatiš*), “chief of four,” may reflect a hierarchy borrowed from a military context (Aperghis 1999: pp. 177–178).

At least 40 individuals are connected with the term *damanna* and at least 150 with *šaramanna*; one of these was a woman, Matmabba (NN 2068; cf. Hallock 1985: p. 606). As stated above, *šaramanna* officials could seal according to the single-seal or counter-seal protocols, indicating higher or lower authority. Foremost among them were the department heads, including treasurers, chiefs of workers, cattle-chiefs, and chief-equerries (by contrast, the officials in Hinz 1971: pp. 279–297 are actually suppliers).

As it appears from the PTA, the treasurer was responsible (*šaramanna*) for silver payments. The actual payment was done by an official comparable to the suppliers/storekeepers. Many beneficiaries were craftsmen at Persepolis, but silver was also issued to herdsmen and workers at other places in the Persepolis region.

In the PFA, Karkiš (not the same as the aforementioned satrap) and Šuddayauda (*Çūtayauda-) are consecutive holders of PFS 0001*, the seal of the Persepolis region (on its inscription see Garrison 2017: p. 61). Most occurrences of these regional directors as *šaramanna* or *damanna* officials and/or PFS 0001* pertain to rations in kind given to teams of workers, a minority to deposits of commodities at their disposal. A few texts make explicit the designation of Karkiš and Šuddayauda: *kapnuškira*, “treasurer” (NN 1069, NN 1411, NN 1724, NN 2079). This seems to confirm Koch’s suggestion that they were the predecessors of the treasurer Baradkama (1981, 1990: pp. 235–246; cf. Lewis 1994: p. 23 n. 38; Uchitel 1989: p. 234), yet with the proviso that they and their successors were not involved in activities beyond the Persepolis region proper. In this sense, the overarching authority suggested by the term “Hofschatzwart” (Hinz 1971: p. 261) cannot be justified. The relevant officials indeed headed the central silver depot, but their responsibilities in directing part of the labor force were geographically limited.

The issuing of rations in kind shows that the treasurer’s responsibility as *šaramanna/damanna* official was not defined by the handling of silver. To understand this, another designation for high-ranking *šaramanna* officials, *kurdabattiš* (**gr̥dapatiš*, cf. Akk. *gardupatu*), may be invoked. Its contexts show that this term does not mean “major domus” (as Hinz 1971: p. 280) but “chief of workers.” In the years *before* he used PFS 0001*, Šuddayauda is attested with this designation; Karkiš had it *after* his period as holder of the same seal. Although there are similarities between their activities before and after the change (excluding homonymy, *pace* Koch 1990: p. 244), the care for teams of *kapnuškip* and hence the supervision over the factories in the region seem specifically associated with the use of PFS 0001* and the designation *kapnuškira*. In addition, Karkiš and Šuddayauda occur, with very few exceptions, only as *damanna* official during their term as *kapnuškira*. This suggests a division of responsibilities: the *kapnuškira* directed work teams in the specific sphere of craft production whereas the *kurdabattiš* was a regional chief of ration and labor logistics for other workers. The occasional collocation of a *kapnuškira* and a *kurdabattiš* reinforces this impression (see e.g. PT 42).

Seven other *šaramanna* officials in the PFA/PTA were *kurdabattiš*. One Mišparma had his own estate (cf. below) and may be identical with Mišparma the *habez(z)iya*, “irrigator” (**abēčiya-*; NN 0522: 13’, Fort. 6575), possibly a court title (Henkelman 2003: p. 121 n. 23). Another high-ranking *šaramanna*

official Iršena, director of the Fahliyān region and holder of a striking, inscribed seal originally carved for a certain Huban-ahpi (PFS 0004*). Also, in the Fahliyān region, the old Elamite city of Hidali appears to have had its own treasury (in the sense of silver depot; NN 1564). It was headed by Mitrabada, the *kanzabara*, “treasurer.” The impression is that the Fahliyān region had a local hierarchy parallel to that of the Persepolis region and directly subordinated to Parnakka (cf. Tuplin 1987a: p. 130 n. 79; Henkelman 2017: pp. 97–99). A parallel from Achaemenid Arachosia, however, suggests a similar yet somewhat different configuration with a general treasurer (*gnzbr*) “in Arachosia” and local officers designated *sgn* (Akk. *šaknu*; “governor, commander”) and *’pgnzbr* (**upa-ganzabara*-, “subtreasurer”; Naveh and Shaked 1973; Hinz 1975; Stolper 2000; Henkelman 2017: pp. 102–109; King 2019).

A prominent department head and *šaramanna* official was Harrena (*Aryēna-), as *kasabattiš* (**gēθapatiš*), “chief of livestock,” responsible for livestock and (contracted) herdsman. One exceptional document shows him entrusting 283 sheep/goats to a herdsman (NN 2572); normally this part of Harrena’s activities is invisible. Sometimes Parnakka ordered Harrena to arrange the allocation of livestock under his responsibility to workers under Šuddayauda’s responsibility, demonstrating the various jurisdictions involved (see e.g. NN 0727).

A last example is Hiumizza, *šaramanna* official and *aššabattiš* (**asapatiš*), “horsemaster, equerry” (NN 1352), who set barley rations for equids and also issued wine orders for them. For each commodity he used a different seal, one of which is also found on Aramaic tablets, suggesting that Hiumizza’s office operated in more than one administrative language (compare Azzoni and Dusinberre 2014). In addition, he received (exceptional) meat rations for the grooms under his command.

Some transactions are never associated with a *šaramanna* official. This is notably the case with travel rations. Here, however, one has to remember the sealed travel authorizations issued by Parnakka and by his colleagues at Susa and other administrative centers. As the famous Aršāma travel authorization shows (cf. Chapter 56 Seals and Sealing), these specified the amounts of the daily rations to be given to the individual travelers, which effectively defines the addressors as *šaramanna* officials. Along similar lines, Parnakka should perhaps be seen as (the mostly unmentioned) *šaramanna* official responsible for organizing state-sponsored offerings.

A conspicuous number of *šaramanna* officials are connected with estates, *irmadim* (previously normalized as *irmatam*; **ṛmāta*; Hinz 1973: pp. 60–63) or *appišdamanna* (**abistāvana*-; Gershevitch 1969: p. 166; Garrison and Henkelman 2020b). In the PFA, 18 named individuals appear as holders of an *irmadim*, three of an *appišdamanna*. Prominent among these are (another) Iršena and Mišparma, both *šaramanna* official and *kurdabattiš* (PF 1368, PF

2027). Eight or nine other *šaramanna* officials and one *damanna* official also held estates. At the time of Darius' accession, Vivāna, satrap of Arachosia, is said to have had a (fortified) *irmadim* (DB_c III.31). This may well have been a land grant that Vivāna received ex officio. The same may be true for the estates held by the administrators in Pārsa. At any rate, the PFA contexts suggest that their *irmadims* were partially co-opted by the general administration and probably subjected to taxation, hence their appearance in the archive (cf. Uchitel 1997; Henkelman 2018). The same applies to larger grants known as *ulhi*, lit. "house," held mainly by members of the royal family (cf. Briant 2002: pp. 444–446). They may be contrasted with more independent and therefore elusive entities. The exceptional delivery of 9405l of wine to a temple at Hakurtiš (NN 2240) suggests an institution of some importance, yet not integrated in the economic grid visible in the PFA (Henkelman 2008a: pp. 121, 469–473; cf. Chapter 86 Practice of Worship in the Achaemenid heartland).

The case of the *šaramanna* officials is starting to reveal an "administrative nobility" comparable to that found in Achaemenid Babylonia and elsewhere. A host of other functionaries is mentioned in the PFA/PTA (Hallock 1969: pp. 663–776; Koch 1983: esp. pp. 42–47; Tavernier 2007a: pp. 414–437, 503–511), but their ranks and responsibilities are less well understood simply because they are not as well documented. One wonders, for example, what the duties of a *dahiuttuktiš*, lit. "land-payer" (**dahyutūxtiš*), may have been (NN 1557).

Many designations in the PFA and the PTA pertain to assessment, taxation, and inspection. They include *pirraššakka/pirrašakurra*, "investigator" (**frasaka(ra)-*), *miramara* (**vīra(h)māra-*) and *karamaraš*, "registrar" (**kāra(h)māra-*; cf. Stolper 1977: pp. 259–266; Henkelman 2017: pp. 74–75 n. 44), *hubazanuyaš*, "police officer" (**upajan(i)ya-*), *halnut/ballat-baššira*, "tablet inspector" (*pace* Giovinazzo 1989: 206f; cf. Koch 1983: p. 42), *mušin-zikkira/ušu-huttira*, "accountant," *titikaš*, "(labor) supervisor" (**didika-*), *tidda huttira*, "(labor) report maker" (cf. Koch 1983: 30f; Henkelman 2010: p. 702 n. 135), and *dattimaraš*, "road inspector" (**dāti(h)māra-*; Henkelman 2017: pp. 72–74; cf. Chapter 53 Roads and Communication). The emphasis on inspection and control strikingly correlates with what has been described as the "policing function" of the archives themselves (Jones and Stolper 2008: pp. 33, 46–47 quoting Sir Moses Finley).

Epilogue

Upon approaching Persepolis early in 330 BCE, Alexander was met by hundreds of Greeks enslaved in what Curtius calls an *ergastulum*, "workhouse" (5.5.5–24 esp. p. 13). The classical sources predictably stress their grim condition and their liberation by the enlightened Macedonian. But, as Briant has argued, their presence in the heartland also underlines the continuation of

an institutional economy with high numbers of dependent workers, the *kurtas* of the Persepolis archives (1982b: p. 223 n. 353, 329 n. 161, 2002: pp. 435, 733–737). Other episodes confirm this image, such as the continuation of regular sacrifices at Cyrus' tomb (Henkelman 2003) and Peucestes' evident control over an effective logistic apparatus in 316 BCE (cf. above). Perhaps most telling is Arrian's account (*Anab.* 6.23) of Alexander's find, after his desperate march through Gedrosia, of a grain supply large enough to feed his entire army. Not only is such a store only thinkable in the context of a well-functioning institutional economy, but Alexander seemed to have adopted existing bureaucratic protocol by sealing the bags of grain, a procedure apparently not recognized by his soldiers (Henkelman 2017: pp. 45–49). Another example of well-functioning logistic structures is that of the great number of camels and cooked food sent all the way from Parthia and Areia to relieve the suffering Macedonians on their ill-fated coastal march (Arr. *Anab.* 6.27.6; Curt. 9.10.17). It was by tapping into institutional resources and adopting existing administrative structures, hierarchies, and protocols that the Macedonians could quickly and effectively bring the Persian Empire under control. Without these highly-developed systems, even the great Alexander would have been irredeemably lost (cf. Briant 2009, 2018).

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CHAPTER 63

Babylonia

Kristin Kleber

General Outlines: Power Negotiation, Elite Management, and Administration

The image of Cyrus as a “father” and of Darius as a “shopkeeper” of the Persian Empire (Herodotus, *Histories* III, 89) conforms with the Greek-style historiography that wallows in colorful stereotypes of the main characters. However, these stereotypes may be dim reflections of how their reigns were perceived in retrospect by the subject populations of the empire during Herodotus’ lifetime. Modern historians have long noticed the smooth transition from the Neo-Babylonian to Persian rule in Babylonia. Yet, Cyrus’ policy has nothing to do with Cyrus’ individual character; neither was it a reward for an alleged conspiracy of the Marduk priesthood against Nabonidus in favor of Cyrus. Cyrus rather acted with the circumspect foresight of an heir who suddenly stood at the top of a large and powerful governmental apparatus that had until then successfully run the empire that he had just acquired. It was a delicate balancing act between assuming leadership and the accommodation of the aspirations of the Babylonian elite. While his position in the Iranian core seems to have been secure, an obstructive Babylonian administrative apparatus was able to topple the success of the takeover operation. Hence, the Babylonian elite played the key role in the imperial power negotiations in the transition years. But Cyrus was by no means a pupil to be schooled by the Babylonians in how to run an empire. From the very beginning he acted

strategically, taking up the most immediate matters: First, the establishment of a satrapy, “Babylonia and Across-the-River,” with a trusted Iranian at its top; second, the spatial integration of the eastern and western parts of his realm. In retrospect, the takeover can be called a great success. When Darius ascended the throne 18 years later, the focal point of power negotiations shifted toward Iran. Seven Persian noble families were the stakeholders to whom Darius owed his success in the chaos that broke out after the murder of Bardiya.¹ It was to them that he owed his gratitude; and he tried to manage the traditional Babylonian elite without making great concessions. During his long reign he was able to expand the empire further to include India and parts of Greece; in addition he carried out ambitious building projects (Persepolis, Susa). This cost money, and Babylonia was presumably a substantial contributor for covering these costs. In the cuneiform documentation we can detect a streamlining of the fiscal administration. What first appeared as a mere conflation of taxes with multiple origins into a system that could be administered more easily most likely brought about an increase in the overall tax burden. At the same time Babylonia experienced a severe inflation of prices. For the Babylonian elite, imperial handling of them seems to have been detrimental. While playing off one family against another seems to have kept things in check for a while, the elite increasingly started to operate in concert toward the end of Darius’ reign. The dissatisfaction culminated in the Babylonian revolt in the second year of Xerxes’ reign (484 BCE). The king crushed this rebellion and punished those who had instigated it, the elite of the northern Babylonian cities. Their archives, our best source of information, end abruptly, suggesting their disempowerment. Since we lack sources from the later years of Xerxes’ reign, it is difficult to detect the administrative reforms that must have followed this event. Those who had run the administration, who had held the most important civic and cultic offices in the rebellious cities, were gone. From later texts we see that new structures appeared in addition to remaining old ones. It seems that the most important factor was people. The Persians created new economic and bureaucratic elite whose success and influence did not rest in ancient vested rights and in the support of their local clan but in the benevolence of the king. When our sources begin to reappear in the reign of Artaxerxes I, the administrative system of state lands, as such pre-existing, had become the model to administer areas that were previously in the hands of municipal administrations. The titles of former local high officials appear but rarely: this can be interpreted as a loss of influence, occasionally (for some cities and some periods) the loss of the office itself, but not a ubiquitous and permanent abolition of the inherited pre-Achaemenid administrative structures. It is hard to see what the satrapal and imperial superstructures looked like. Our texts tend to focus on local matters, interfacing infrequently and scarcely with the imperial administration. The documentation that resulted

from this interaction was probably primarily recorded in Aramaic language on parchment. For the province Babylonia, the Achaemenid Empire took over almost everything in the Babylonian administrative system, thereby perpetuating the structures that the Neo-Babylonian kings had taken over from Assyria.² Only the satrap was placed as a provincial administrator on top of the local Babylonian administration. In the course of time, structures were changed and new ones added. Occasionally we get glimpses that certain bureaucracies operated in a comparable manner all over the empire. A typical “Persian” innovation is the (probably) empire-wide provisioning tax for the court.

In the following I will expand this general outline to include historical detail and references. I blend the presentation of structure (tiers of the administration) with historical narrative in order to emphasize the diachronic developments that took place during various phases of the empire’s existence. At the outset few remarks on Neo-Babylonian kings are warranted to underline the fact that elite management by granting and taking away administrative posts was a strategy that has been practiced long before the Persians.

Power Relationships: The Babylonian Administration and Their King

Previous, now outdated, accounts of the transition from Neo-Babylonian to Persian rule in Babylonia held that the last king of the Neo-Babylonian Empire, Nabonidus, was an eccentric personality who was in conflict with the Marduk (Bēl)-priesthood in Babylon (e.g. von Soden 1962: p. 129). According to this view, Cyrus was welcomed as a liberator by the Babylonians who opened the gates of the capital to the Persian army on October 13, 539 BCE. The new Achaemenid history movement (e.g. Kuhrt 1990 and 2007, see also Jursa 2007: pp. 73–77) has shown that this view is heavily influenced by Persian propaganda texts. The idea of a deep schism between state power and temple is a fiction. Babylonian temples were both religious institutions and institutions of the state. To be sure, conflicts between local, clan-based power structures and the central royal power existed, but these occurred just as well during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II. These conflicts were rarely of a religious nature but rather frictions connected to prestige and personal wealth (Kleber 2008: pp. 333, 344–348). Neo-Babylonian kings punished a (perceived) lack of support or passive resistance either by replacing local officials or by temporarily abolishing an office held by locals, transferring the tasks to royal officials. The same strategy – the installation of loyal servants who owe their career to the king – was utilized by Neo-Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian, and Persian kings to bring local centrifugal powers under control. Nabonidus was no exception in this. When he became king after a palace coup, he replaced

the royal superintendent (*qīpu*) in Sippar (Beaulieu 1989: p. 116) and abolished the office of “bishop” (*šatammu*, the highest temple administrator) in the Eanna temple in Uruk, and introduced several new temple offices held by royal courtiers in order to gain a tighter royal control over this temple (Kleber 2008: pp. 3–52). It is not excluded that these administrative reforms were a reaction to the lack of support of the Nabonidus–Belshazzar coup by local Urukean families. In the eleventh year of Nabonidus’ reign (543 BCE), while the king was still in Arabia, the bishop’s office was reintroduced. The reinstallation of a man who had held the office before was probably endorsed by the crown prince, Belshazzar, who ran the state affairs during his father’s absence. We do not know why the temple was granted a “bishop” again but considerations to secure local compliance in face of the growing threat of a Persian rival is a likely scenario. The Nabonidus Chronicle tells us that in 547 BCE Cyrus marched through Babylonian territory to conquer Lydia. Its entries for 546 and 545 BCE are damaged but the legible passages speak of Ishtar of Uruk, Persia and the governor of the Sealand (*šakin māti*), the southernmost province of Babylonia.³ This is an indication that a Persian army was active in southern Mesopotamia around this time. Another sign that Urukeans feared the Persian army instead of collaborating with them is the compliance with the orders to send the statues of the city’s goddesses to Babylon for safeguarding, just as other Babylonian cities had done (Beaulieu 1993). The Persians were a foreign power. Babylonians had to expect the same fate that they inflicted on subjugated nations during the expansion of the Neo-Babylonian Empire. The Babylonian army was defeated in a decisive battle near Opis, that is, near the mountain pass that allows entry to the Mesopotamian lowlands from the Zagros. The Chronicle reports that Cyrus’ army plundered towns and massacred Babylonians. Only then did Sippar and finally Babylon surrender (Grayson 1975: p. 109; Kuhrt 1990: pp. 132–135; Kuhrt 2007: p. 177). There is illuminating anecdotal evidence attesting to a climate of fear among the Babylonian elite in the days following Cyrus’ conquest (Tolini 2011: pp. 33–34). This evidence comes from the archive of a family from Babylon whose business was connected to the crown. The first text, drafted on December 10, 539 BCE in Borsippa, is a receipt of silver transferred to female family members. Another document constitutes the will of the head of the Egibi family who had been active as an agent of the crown prince Belshazzar during the last years of Babylonian rule. In it, he transferred all his property to his wife and as dowries to his daughters while he and his son enjoyed lifelong usufruct of the property together with the women. This document was also drafted in Borsippa, where this family may have fled after Babylon had been taken by the Persians two months earlier. The transfer of all property to female family members is unusual. In all likelihood the family feared negative repercussions

of the regime change on the male line because they had been important business partners and agents of the Neo-Babylonian crown. The family returned to their business in Babylon later, as the new rulers did not expropriate the collaborators of the old regime but were interested in their cooperation.

Inheriting a State: The Administrative Takeover of the Neo-Babylonian Empire by the Persians

The capital Babylon had fallen to the Persian army on October 13, 539 BCE. Persian guards protected the temple of Bēl in order to prevent chaos and cultic transgressions. After his entry into the capital on October 29 of that year, Cyrus proclaimed *šulmu* (peace and safety), i.e. the end of hostilities accompanying conquest, “to all of Babylon.” His first administrative acts followed instantly, such as the order to let all gods who had been gathered in Babylon return to their home shrines. Gūbaru, according to the Chronicle text “his” (=Cyrus) “governor” (^{LÚ}NAM-*šú*) appointed, or better confirmed, Babylonian administrative officials (^{LÚ}NAM^{MEŠ}) in their office. In all likelihood these officials had been summoned to Babylon to witness the pomp of Cyrus’ triumphant entry and to swear the loyalty oath to the new Persian rulers. This interpretation is corroborated by texts from Babylonian cities such as Uruk and Sippar. As far as we can see, not a single municipal or temple official was removed from office after the Persian conquest (Jursa 2007: p. 80). Officials from the highest tiers of the empire’s administration remained in office as well. This policy, combined with Cyrus’ propagandistic presentation of himself as a legitimate ruler chosen by the Babylonian imperial god Bēl, guaranteed a smooth takeover, not only of the capital and the core but of the Babylonian Empire as a whole. Military superiority can achieve a decisive victory but permanent rule needs the compliance of the elite who run the administration. Prior to his conquest, Cyrus had no influential supporters in Babylonia; he was in dire need of the collaboration of those who possessed local knowledge and the networks of control and revenue collection.

A legitimate Babylonian king’s rule was symbolically reconfirmed by the gods Bēl and Nabû every year in a ritual during the New Year Festival in Babylon. The passage of the Chronicle tablet that reports about the first New Year Festival under Persian rule is unfortunately damaged, which impedes an unequivocal interpretation (Grayson 1975: pp. 110–111). However, it is clear that Babylonia was in an unusual situation thereafter. During the first year Cyrus’ son, Cambyses, bore the title “King of Babylon” (*šar bābili*), particularly in date formulas from texts stemming from northern Babylonia, while southern Babylonia only mentions Cyrus as “King of the Lands” (*šar mātāte*). Tablets from northern Babylonia also combine the two: “First year of Cyrus,

King of the Lands, (and) Cambyases, King of Babylon.”⁴ What happened? Does this indicate an intentional power sharing, i.e. Cambyases as regent over the Babylonian core area while his father acted as the imperial sovereign?⁵ Andrew George (1996: pp. 379–386) suggested a new reading of the pertinent Chronicle passage, restoring the name of Cyrus in a break. According to George, both Cyrus and Cambyases carried out rituals in Babylon on the 4th of Nisan: Cyrus entered the temple in “Elamite” (Persian) dress to “take the hands of the god Nabû” while Cambyases received the “scepter of the land” in a ritual for the installation of the crown prince, not of the king himself. This, however, does not explain the fact that Cambyases was called “king of Babylon” during the first year. Gauthier Tolini (2011: pp. 135–145) rejected George’s restoration of Cyrus’ name in the broken passage. According to his interpretation, Cyrus had intended to celebrate the New Year Festival in Babylon personally to receive the religious legitimization of his rule over Babylonia. But then something unforeseen happened: the queen passed away. The Chronicle reports her death and the ensuing mourning period between the 27th of Addar and the 3rd of Nisan. Cambyases received the scepter on the 4th of Nisan. According to Tolini, Cyrus was not present because he had to leave for Persia to carry out the burial rites for his wife, while Cambyases celebrated the festival in Babylon in Cyrus’ stead. This, in turn, effected the confusion displayed by the dating formulas of the first year. Whatever happened, from the second year onward Cambyases disappears from the date formula and Cyrus bears the double title “King of Babylon, King of the Lands.”

The Governor (Satrap) of Babylonia

The Akkadian designation for the governor/satrap was *bēl pīhāti* (also *pīhātu/pāhātu*). *Bēl pīhāti* is, just like the Iranian loanwords *ahšadrapānu* in Babylonian and *satrapes* in Greek texts, a general word for “governor” that could also refer to officials on a lower tier of the administration (Stolper 1987: p. 396). The Chronicle reports that the governor Gūbaru was in office on the day when Cyrus entered Babylon and proclaimed “peace” (*šulmu*). Gūbaru’s identity is only briefly referred to as “his (= Cyrus’) governor” (^{LU}NAM-*šú*) but his installation in office is not discussed. Until recently scholars followed San Nicolò’s assumption that this Gūbaru of the Chronicle was not the same person as Gūbaru, the satrap of Babylonia, the reason being that the first administrative text mentioning Gūbaru as satrap of Babylonia (*bēl pīhāt Bābili*) dates from the fourth year of Cyrus. According to this traditional view, the Persians left Nabû-ahhē-bullit, who is attested as *šakin māti* until the third year of Cyrus, in office. The office of *šakin māti* used to be understood as that of a governor of the Babylonian core in the time of the Neo-Babylonian Empire.

That office, according to this view, was only abolished in the fourth year when the satrap Gūbaru was appointed. This assumption, which leaves unexplained the person of Gūbaru, the governor mentioned in the Chronicle, is doubtful. The title *šakin māti* is the abbreviated title of the Governor of the Sealand (*šakin māt tāmti*).⁶ After the Persian conquest, Babylonia became a province administered together with Syria (“Across-the-River”). The newly established satrapy roughly covered the territory of the directly administrated Neo-Babylonian territories, excluding the vassal states. Gūbaru, satrap of “Babylon(ia) and Across-the-River,” is probably identical with the governor Gūbaru mentioned in the Chronicle, even if the Chronicle – a text written later – gave him this title in retrospect. Gūbaru may have been installed as satrap immediately after the conquest; in this case it is only due to accidents of discovery that his name does not appear in Babylonian legal documents before Cyrus’ fourth year. Alternatively, the satrapy was formally constituted later (at some point between Cyrus’ first and third years) and Gūbaru, who had already played an important role in 539 BCE, was formally installed as its governor. In 539 BCE, Gūbaru’s first administrative act was to “entrust” (*qiāpu*) the “governors” (^{LÚ}NAM^{MEŠ}) in Babylon with their administrative tasks, now in the service of the new Persian government. I assume that the word “governors” is used here as a catch-all term for officials of the Nabonidus administration, in the palace and from other cities and towns, who in reality bore diverse office designations (Kleber 2017). Their confirmation in office ensured their cooperation and thereby a smooth administrative takeover. In many ways the satrap of Babylonia took over functions that had previously rested with the Neo-Babylonian king. In Achaemenid-Babylonian texts we see that the satrap issued orders to subordinate local institutions, supervised administrative audits of the temples at the beginning of the year, and participated in litigations. Gūbaru’s son, Nabugu, held a high function in the Babylonian legal administration. We do not exactly know where Gūbaru resided in Babylon, as all Neo-Babylonian palaces in the capital remained in use. The Late Achaemenid Kasr-archive suggests that the North Palace (Hauptburg) was the residence of a (later) satrap. Texts from the reign of Darius I also mention a “New Palace,” which may refer to the western part of the South Palace with the adjacent “Perserbau.” Persian-period building activities are also attested at Nebuchadnezzar’s “Summer Palace” in the Bābil-area (Koldewey 1990⁵: pp. 134–139; Gasche 2010).

In addition to Gūbaru (attested in administrative texts from 535–525 BCE) we know the names of other “Governors of Babylon and Across-the-River.”⁷ These are: Uštānu (Hystanes): 521–516 BCE and Huta-x-x-³, son of Pagakanna: 486 BCE. In the reign of Xerxes, Babylonia and Greater Syria (“Across-the-River”) appear as two separate units. Two satraps of Babylonia (=“Babylon” or “Land of Akkad”) are attested in cuneiform documents: Artareme

(Artarios): 431–423 BCE and another Gūbaru: 420–419 BCE. Cuneiform texts mention two governors of the province “Across-the-River”: Tattannu (502 BCE) and Bēšunu/Bēl-ušuršu (407–401 BCE).

Occasionally we get glimpses of the internal satrapal administration that seems to operate similar administrative procedures empire-wide. An example is the attestation of two satrapal (Aramaic) clerks designated as *sēpiru* (and) *bēl ṭēmi*. Corresponding designations are borne by staff belonging to the chancery of the satrap of Egypt, *sapṛā* and *bēl ṭēm*, and by two members of the Samaritan provincial administration (Stolper 1989: pp. 298–299). Elamite variants of the titles appear in the Persepolis Fortification Archive (Henkelman 2008: pp. 147–153).

Showcasing Imperial Power

The respect for traditions and vested rights as well as the harnessing of divine support are important, but kingship also had to be apparent and immanent from time to time. Greek Classical sources mention Babylon as one of the main royal residences along with Susa, Ecbatana, Persepolis, and Sardis. These sources suggest a regular seasonal migration of the Persian court, but Christopher Tuplin (1998) has shown that a fixed order of seasonal sojourns cannot be verified by contemporaneous sources.⁸ The extensive territories of the empire posed a severe administrative challenge, not only for the representation of royal power but for communication and the movement of people and goods in general. The Zagros mountain range is a natural divide between the Mesopotamian alluvial plains and Iran. The valley of the Diyala river in the north and the southeastern marsh lands with their rivers as well as the Persian Gulf are the only natural connecting points. It comes as no surprise that from the very beginning of Persian rule Babylonian tax funds and corvée labor were invested in the infrastructure in order to create effective lines of communication. One of the most important undertakings was the building of the Kebar canal, which for the first time enabled direct riverine traffic between the area south of Babylon and Susa (Tolini 2011: pp. 56–72). Works on this canal started in the reign of Cambyses and continued until its completion in the reign of Darius I. It formed the logistical base for the regular food supplies (*upiyāta*) which Babylonia had to send to Elam (Jursa 2009: pp. 244–245 and 2011a: p. 442). Royal domains with palaces that served as road stations were built or expanded, e.g. at Abanu and Bēltiya in Babylonia, at Tahmakka = Taoke on the Iranian coast of the Persian Gulf, and at Matannan in the Persis (Kleber 2008: pp. 85–94; 193–194; Henkelman 2008a). These road stations could include a royal park (Akkadian *pardēsu* = Greek *parádeisos*, both borrowings from Persian) for the convenience of the court or other high-ranking travelers.

Already in the reign of Cambyses, Babylonian workers were sent to Humadešu, the town near the later capital Persepolis. At the same time Babylonian businessmen traveled there (Tolini 2011: pp. 80–95). Humadešu, and the Persepolis area in general, must have played an important role already before Darius I ascended the throne. The available documentation, however, does not allow us to establish the function of this town during this time yet. In the reign of Darius, Babylonian officials and businessmen frequently traveled to Susa. At least from 510 until 486 BCE Susa seems to have functioned as the administrative center where audits for Babylonian officials were conducted (Waerzeggers 2010). It is remarkable that these men traveled to Humadešu and Susa, probably where the king was, instead of merely discharging their obligations at the satrapal court in Babylon. The satrap conducted audits for temples in Babylon (Kleber 2008: pp. 61–66), possibly in issues of different or lesser order, and it is possible that the satrap was also present at the imperial court when the Babylonians came. There is no clear evidence from Babylonian sources that Babylon ever functioned as an administrative center of the empire.

Local Administrative Structures in Babylonia

The Phase of Transition

Administrative structures were continued, as were the personnel. The latter's willingness to pledge loyalty to the new regime was likely a prerequisite for their confirmation in office. Procedures slowed down because new clerks working for the Persian overlords sought to keep track of outstanding balances due to the Neo-Babylonian crown, which still had to be repaid to the palace administration, but the administrative takeover was effective (Kleber 2008: p. 243; Kleber 2017: p. 703).

Due to the lack of sources from the palace we cannot make detailed statements about continuity or change in the realm of the inner palace circles (Jursa 2010b). A structural reform is not visible: offices such as the “chief musician” (*rab zammārī*) and the overseer of the private palace quarters (*ša muhbi bītāni*) continued to exist but we have no information about the holders of these offices. Rather surprising is the personal continuity of some high state administrators, including military officials. Most prominent among the high state officials is the *zazakku* Rēmūt, responsible for Babylonian temples, who was still in office in the reign of Cambyses (Jursa 2007: p. 81). The office of *zazakku* is also mentioned in Darius' Bisotun inscription, according to which the pretender to the throne, Nebuchadnezzar III, had been the *zazakku*. A courtier of Nabonidus who had commanded a “new detachment of archers” was still active in the third year of Cyrus (Kleber 2008: p. 235). Furthermore, the treasurer (*rab kāširī*) and the *bēl pihāti* (the governor of the

Babylonian heartland), who both oversaw fiscal matters, continued in office (Jursa 2010b: pp. 75; 82–83).

Nothing changed on the level of city and temple administration. Large cities were headed by a city governor (*šākin tēmi*) and smaller ones were administered by a *šangû*, who was the head of a town and its temple simultaneously. The city governors of Babylon, Borsippa, Nippur, and Uruk remained in office after the regime change (Joannès 1990: p. 177; Jursa 2007: pp. 79–82; Stolper 1988: p. 130). A *šākin tēmi* is also attested for Dilbat, Kutha, and Ur in the early Achaemenid period. The city governors collected taxes and organized the performance of corvée duty, both civic (in particular building projects) and military. They frequently appeared in juridical panels. A vice-governor (*šanû*) assisted the governor in addition to other executive officials, such as the *paqdu* who was responsible for the town watch and policing, including arrests and house searches when a crime had been committed (Pirngruber 2013). The supervision of the agricultural hinterland lay in the hands of a *gugallu* who organized irrigation and the collection of taxes and dues on landed property (Jursa 2009).

Babylonian temples were state institutions but traditionally also a focal point of local power, identity, and prestige for the local urban elite. Already in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar the crown felt the need to introduce royal courtiers in local temples' administrations in addition to the royal superintendent (*qīpu*). These outsiders with strong personal allegiances to the king worked alongside members of the local urban elite who held the offices of “bishop” (*šatammu*, smaller towns had a *šangû*) and temple scribe. The heavily urbanized north formed the Babylonian core area called Akkad. In addition to the ancient urban centers with traditional Babylonian culture, there were areas headed by Chaldean and Aramaean sheikhs. The last governor of the province Sealand (*šakin māti*) under Nabonidus, Nabû-ahhē-bullit, remained in office at least until the third year of Cyrus. His vice-governor, Madān-šarru-ušur, is still attested in the reign of Cambyses. Another administrative unit that the Persians inherited from their Neo-Babylonian predecessors is Tupliaš in the Tigris region. In view of overall continuity, it is likely that the complete internal administration of Babylonia was left unchanged until the reign of Darius.

Revenue and Control

Cambyes' reign was overshadowed by a severe drought that had begun in his accession year and lasted at least until his fourth year. The relentless collection of foodstuffs for the royal court as well as the continuation of the corvée work on the canal-building projects in spite of people's suffering caused resentments

among the population (Kleber 2012; Jursa 2014: pp. 79–80). Local administrators probably shared these resentments against Persian rule secretly but naturally they never expressed them in writing. After the deaths of Cambyses and his successor Bardiya, the chaos at the imperial center was amplified by simultaneous upheavals in various provinces that challenged Persian rule. In Babylonia, Darius I had to defeat two successive pretenders to the throne, who called themselves Nebuchadnezzar (III and IV) (Lorenz 2008). Local Babylonian administrators who had supported Nebuchadnezzar IV after they had sworn allegiance to Darius were removed from office after Darius had regained control over Babylonia. At the Eanna temple in Uruk, the king not only replaced people in his second and again in his fourth regnal year but also changed the traditional rank of temple offices (Kleber 2008: pp. 25–26). This is clearly more than a disgruntlement about the local supporters of the Babylonian pretenders to the throne; it is a conscious manipulation of Uruk's political power fabric. Darius seems to have experimented with elite shifts in various Babylonian towns throughout his long reign. The family Ša-Nāšišu, a previously less important clan but one that was engaged with tax collection for the Persian rulers, was able to secure some of the highest civic offices in several Babylonian towns (Waerzeggers, in press). Members of this family became the governor of Babylon (*šākin tēmi*), the *šatammu* of Esangila, and the *šangū* of Sippar, an unprecedented accumulation of power in the hands of one family. For reasons unknown, the star of this family sank later in the reign of Darius, the officials being replaced by members of other clans (Waerzeggers, in press).

Babylonia's special status began to dwindle in the reign of Darius, possibly already in the reign of Cambyses. Rollinger (2014: p. 167) sees the watershed in the change of the Teispid to the Achaemenid dynasty, i.e. beginning in the reign of Darius I. In the latter's reign, the exploitation of the province through systematized taxation became more structured. Had the reign of Cambyses not been so short and troublesome,⁹ we would possibly see more signs for the Persian political agenda, namely a slow, conscious shift toward a full integration of the territories and institutions of the former Neo-Babylonian state into the greater whole of the Persian Empire. The administrative takeover that had begun in 539 BCE took further shape in the reign of Cambyses. The satrapal and/or imperial administration was seeking knowledge and control over Babylonia's institutions (texts 3 and 33 in Kleber 2008: pp. 58–59 and 270–271). Under Cambyses, two new high officials were added to the Eanna temple's bureaucracy, among them an alphabet scribe, obviously to have additional documentation in Aramaic, the administrative language of the empire. In the reign of Darius, the treasurer is often referred to with the Persian loanword *ganzabarru* (Stolper 2006: pp. 229–230), but this does not necessarily indicate Iranian control over this office. Nevertheless, the fact that Darius had local laws gathered in Egypt and reformed the tax system in Babylonia indicates

that he aspired to a tighter control over and, perhaps, a more rigorous exploitation of these rich provinces. The tax reform is visible in new taxation terminology, and it is likely that the overall tax burden increased (Jursa 2011a: p. 438). At the same time Babylonia saw increasing inflation of commodity prices, with a peak between 510 and 500 BCE (that is, the second and third decades of Darius' reign), with price levels three to six times higher than in the 560s BCE (the last years of Nebuchadnezzar II) (Jursa 2010a: pp. 745–753). The reasons for this inflation are not fully clarified yet, but more than one reason may apply: lesser agricultural productivity due to a general arid climate trend and the “increased demands on the resources of the province” (Jursa 2010a: p. 752) by the Persian administration. The loss of welfare caused by the inflation and the higher tax burden may – in combination with the disappointments about Darius' handling of the elite's vested interests – have been the reasons for the north Babylonian insurrection in 484 BCE, Xerxes' second year.

The King's New Men

The revolts under Šamaš-eriba und Bēl-šimānī were concentrated in northern Babylonia (Babylon, Borsippa, Sippar; Dilbat, Kiš), that is, the province Akkad, but it is likely that northern Babylonian families who resided in the south (Uruk) sympathized with and supported the insurgents.¹⁰ The revolts lasted approximately three months, from September to November 484 BCE, before they were quelled. The event led to a subsequent disempowerment of the insurgent Babylonian elite (Waerzeggers 2003/2004). The consequences were far-reaching, and in this sense the event can indeed be called a watershed in the history of Babylonian administration (Jursa 2007: p. 90). The archives of traditional, often priestly families from the aforementioned cities end in Xerxes' second year. The few archives that continue “belong to a class of *homines novi*” (Waerzeggers 2003/2004: p. 159) who had economic ties with the Persian administration. With this break in the textual record, we lose our most important sources on Babylonian administrative structures. The texts that appear after that break (with the Murašû archive from c. 440 BCE onward) highlight an area with different economic structures, namely the area around Nippur where deportees had been settled already in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II. State and domain land are predominant there, while the agricultural belt around the northern Babylonian cities consisted mostly of gardens owned by the urban elite. Therefore it is hard to determine how exactly administrative change was implemented. But wherever we get a glimpse of larger regional control, it seems that new structures had been put in place. Fiscal and judicial districts now followed the location of canals, a new

organizing principle.¹¹ These districts had clerks who bore the Iranian designation *dātabarru*. Other new titles of Iranian origin appear, such as *ammarkaru* “accountant” (Stolper 2006: pp. 229–230 and 230–231). Courtiers were now more often designated by the Persian word *ustarbaru* instead of the previous Babylonian *ša rēši* (Jursa 2011b). More important than the ethnic affiliation of the office holders was their strong ideological association with the Persian imperial court and the king to whom these people owed their careers. This fostered social mobility: people who did not belong to the traditional temple-based elite received a chance to obtain offices and were granted business opportunities. The Murašû began to use their family name, thereby imitating a tradition of the former city-based Babylonian elite.

Late Achaemenid archives occasionally mention traditional administrative titles, such as city governors (the *šākin tēmi* of Borsippa and the *šandabakku* of Nippur) and *simmagir* (the chief of an area in eastern Babylonia). The fact that these titles appear points to structural continuity, but the holders of these posts may have been less influential than their predecessors before the insurrection against Xerxes. Already in the reign of Darius sub-governors who bear the title *pīhāt/pāhat* begin to appear in our texts more often. It is hard to determine whether the appearance of these governors reflects a measure to curtail the influence of the northern Babylonian cities. The new architecture of control was probably an interlocking network involving domain owners, the satrapy, officials with local resorts, and private entrepreneurs.

The density of information from the satrapy Babylonia is far higher than all the information we have from other satrapies together. Nevertheless, as our sources highlight only local issues, many things remain unclear. Further study will certainly continue to yield more detailed information, but as long as texts from the Late Achaemenid period from northern Babylonia are scarce, it is difficult to trace the exact nature of the administrative reshaping after the Babylonian insurrection against Xerxes.

NOTES

- 1 Bisotūn-inscription OP § 68, IV 80b-86a, Elamite § 54a, III, 89b-94a; Akkadian § 54, 109–112a.
- 2 For the Neo-Babylonian offices originating in the Neo-Assyrian Empire, see Jursa 2010b.
- 3 Grayson 1975: pp. 107–108. The reading of *[Lu]-ú-[du]* “Lydia” (Grayson 1975: p. 282) was, and still is, debated; other scholars proposed reading *Ú-[raš-tu]* “Urartu” here. A collation by R. van der Spek favors a reading *Lú-ú-[du]*. But cf. the recent contribution by Rollinger & Kellner 2019.

- 4 This title distribution is a trend but there are exceptions. Early in the month scribes expected no division of power. This is shown by Cyr. 11 (Sippar) and YOS 7, 5 (Uruk), both dating from the 4th of Nisan, on the day of the ritual itself. Both texts use the expected title “Cyrus, King of Babylon.” For an overview of the titles and this interpretation, see Tolini 2011: pp. 140–145.
- 5 San Nicolò (1941: p. 53 with fn. 3) proposed an analogy with the last years of Assyrian domination of Babylonia, when Assurbanipal as imperial overlord took the title *šar mātāte* while the rulers of Babylon (with the title *šar bābili*), Šamaš-šumu-ukīn and Kandalānu, were subordinate to Assurbanipal’s rule.
- 6 Kleber 2008: pp. 311–331. Babylonia consisted of areas headed by Chaldean and Aramaean sheikhs and a heavily urban Babylonian core (northern Babylonia) as well as the ancient urban centers in the south that were surrounded by the “tribal” areas. The local governors of cities and towns were directly answerable to the Babylonian king. Some scholars proposed that Gūbaru, Cyrus’ governor of the Chronicle, is identical with Ugbāru, whom the Chronicle introduces as the governor of Gutium. This interpretation overrides the Chronicle’s clear and consistent distinction of Ugbāru, the governor of Gutium, who entered Babylon together with the Persian army on the 16th of Tašrīt 17 Nabonidus and who died on the 11th of Arahšamnu of the following year in Babylon, from Gūbaru, Cyrus’ governor, who appointed the “governors” (^{LÚ}NAM^{MEŠ}) in Babylon.
- 7 Stolper 1989: p. 290 and Stolper 1985: p. 91. Only non-ambiguous evidence is included here. The second Gūbaru is attested as “Governor of the Land of Akkad” at least until 419 BCE but may be identical with the “Governor of Babylon” still mentioned in 417 BCE. For coins of Mazaïos, satrap of Across-the-River and Cilicia, see Stolper 1989: pp. 297–298.
- 8 Babylonian texts can prove only one major royal journey through Babylonia, namely Cambyses’ tour through southern Babylonia to Babylon in the autumn of his second regnal year, see San Nicolò 1949; Kleber 2008: pp. 85–94. It is possible that the king traveled from Babylon further to Opis in the spring as members of the Egibi clan were present at Opis in Addāru (March/April) of Cambyses’ second year (Tolini 2011: pp. 171–173).
- 9 The first five years were overshadowed by the famine in Babylonia (Kleber 2012), followed by the conquest of Egypt where the king stayed until shortly before he died.
- 10 Indicated by the disappearance of Babylonian families in the later Achaemenid-period records from Uruk (Kessler 2004).
- 11 Previously lower-level officials (*gugallus*) were responsible for stretches along waterways (within a district or province). High officials governed a city or a province and also acted as judges in their realm.

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good introduction for everyone who approaches the general topic for the first time.

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CHAPTER 64

Egypt

Damien Agut-Labordère

This subject was initiated by Posener's pioneering book *La première domination Perse en Égypte* (Posener 1936) and closely studied by three or four generations of modern scholars, such as Bresciani (1958, 1985), Briant (1988), Vittmann (2011), and others. Nevertheless, there is ample scope for reassessment today. One needs only mention the numerous Demotic papyri found in Saqqara and published by Smith and Martin (2009), which complete the Aramaic texts coming from Elephantine, Hermopolis, and Saqqara thoroughly reedited by Porten and Yardeni (1986–1999 = TADAE I–IV). We must also cite the Demotic ostraka discovered in Ayn Manawir (South Kharge) (Chauveau and Agut-Labordère 2014). Demotic and Aramaic documents allow us to contextualize the hieroglyphic texts, mainly the stereotyped “biographic inscriptions,” and especially the classical sources which became of minor importance in this subject.

Administrative Hierarchy

In spite of its distance from Iran and Babylonia, Egypt was perfectly included in the administrative structure of the Achaemenid Empire; the travel voucher given by the satrap Aršama to his steward Nehtihor when he sent him to Egypt (TADAE I A6.9, Kuhrt 2007: pp. 739–741 n. 4) shows that the network of royal roads was extended to the Nile Valley (see also PF 1544, Kuhrt

2007: p. 734). “Honor to whom honor is due,” we will start with the satrap, the most important Persian authority in Egypt.

The Satrap

It's noteworthy that Egyptian transliterations of the Old Persian title *xšaçaṇpāvan-* « satrap » appear after the conquest of Alexander (Chauveau 2009: p. 126). In Persian-period documents, the satrap of Egypt is referred to by periphrasis “to whom Egypt is entrusted” (P. Berlin 13 539, 13 540; Kuhrt 2007: p. 852 nr. 30i, 853 nr. 30ii). He is also “the Master” (Smith and Martin 2009: pp. 31–39 nr. 4 2.13) or, more precisely, the “Master of Egypt” (P. Rylands IX 2.17 = Vittmann 1998). A rather similar formula is also attested in the body of a Demotic document (P. Mainz 17, Vittmann 2009: p. 103). Besides, a tablet from Sippar (*Camb.* 344) mentions a *sepīru*, i.e. an alphabetic scribe of the “governor of Egypt” (*bēl pihāti mišīrāia*) (Briant 2002: p. 887). MacGinnis (1994: p. 210 nr. 66) supposes this official was in charge of a settlement of Egyptians in Babylonia. Nevertheless, it seems quite impossible that such a local chief had a scribe at his disposal. More probably, we should identify the *bēl pihāti mišīrāia* with the satrap of Egypt. If this conjecture is correct, this tablet should be the older attestation of Persian administration in Egypt. An overview of satraps of Egypt is provided by Jacobs (1994: pp. 163–174). The first known satrap of Egypt is Aryandes, appointed by Cambyses and punished by Darius I (Briant 2002: pp. 409–410). He was replaced by Pherendates I, followed by Achaimenes under the reign of Xerxes (Herodotus 7.7). After the suppression of the Inaros' revolt in Egypt, Megabyzus appointed an individual called Sarsama to command in Egypt (Ktesias F14(38)). It is conceivable that Ktesias' Sarsama was the same person as Aršama attested as satrap in numerous Demotic and Aramaic texts (Quack in this volume) dated from year 30 of Artaxerxes I (435 BCE, Smith and Martin 2009: p. 33) to year 17 of Darius II (407 BCE, P. Mainz 17 published by Vittmann 2009: pp. 102–104). For the second Persian domination, classical authors mention Pherendates II, Sabakes, and Mazakes.

The prime responsibility of the satrap was to ensure that the relevant tribute was collected and delivered to one of the central treasuries situated in Iran. Egypt, in addition to 700 talents, supplied the king the 120 000 bushels of grain allowed to the troops stationed at Memphis. The king also had “money from the fish in Lake Moeris” (Herodotus 3.91–92). Aramaic and Demotic texts from Elephantine and Saqqara give a more practical glimpse of a satrap's duties. He appears above all as the steward of the Royal estates in Egypt. A large group of Elephantine officials have questioned Aršama about a boat belonging to the administration because its deck needed to be entirely replaced. In his response, Aršama authorizes the expenditure required (TADAE I A6.2; Kuhrt 2007: pp. 727–729 nr. 44). Here, the boatmen are

not boat owners; they only have “charge of it” and can use the ship for their own commercial purposes but are obliged, when necessary, to carry out tasks imposed upon them by the civil or military authorities in Elephantine. In case of problems, satraps can send “investigators” to inspect. These “inspectors” (OP **patifrāsa-*) are attested in Demotic (*ptprs*, Smith and Martin 2009: pp. 24–28, nr. 2 front x+6) as well as in Aramaic (PTYRPS/PTPRS, TADAE I A4.2 l. 3 and 12; Porten et al. 1996: pp. 127–129, B1).

In Egypt, temples were separate institutions but not fully autonomous. Thus, in the Saite period, kings controlled the nomination for specific religious offices (P. Rylands IX 3.17). With Persian domination, royal hold on temples became stronger. In April 492 BCE, the satrap Pherendates sends the priests of Khnum in Elephantine a harsh-toned letter (P. Berlin 13 540; Kuhrt 2007: p. 853 nr. 30ii). He reminds the assembly of wab priests to respect the procedure for appointing a new *lesonis* (steward of the temple): the priests propose a candidate but he must satisfy the satrap. A controversial Aramaic letter, the “Passover letter,” shows that appeals could be made to the Persian government to give its blessing to a cult which implied non-working days (TADAE I, A4.1; Kuhrt 2007: pp. 854–855 nr. 31).

High Administration

In high administration, the function of “Overseer of the scribes of the counsel,” director of the general account office, was maintained by Persians (Perdu 1988: pp. 178–179) but the end of the Saitic dynasty resulted in the disappearance of chancellery titles such as “Overseer of the antechamber” (*imī-r3 rwt*) and the rarefaction of several court titles such as “hereditary prince and count” (*iri-p’t h3ty-’ smhr w’ty*) (Vittmann 2009: pp. 99–100). The Saitic title “Chief of the Royal Transport Fleet” (*imī-r3 h’w.w nsw*) is also unattested. It is noteworthy that the case of boat repairing mentioned above is dealt with by the satrap only. Meanwhile, the Petition of Peteise (P. Rylands IX), dated from the early reign of Darius I, mentions a new high administrator, called *sentī* “planner” (Yoyotte 1989). Unfortunately, his personal name never appears and, for prosopographical reasons, it seems rather uncertain to identify him with Horudja, son of Tesnakht, known by a statue and a stela (Vittmann 2009: pp. 101–102). In 513 BCE, Peteise, a scribe of Teudjoi (El-Hibeh), was manhandled and his sons killed by his colleagues because he denounced their conduct as carelessness to an inspector sent by the *sentī*. In the Peteise Petition, the *sentī* is established in Memphis and surrounded by a court of magistrates (*rmt-’3y.w*); he is competent to judge the case of Peteise but rather inefficient to protect him against the priests’ revenge (“First report” P. Rylands IX 1.1–5.14). He is also responsible for the appointment to the priesthood (P. Rylands IX 1.3; Chauveau 2009: pp. 127–128).

Local Administration

In Upper Egypt, and more specifically in Thebaid, Persian power carried out deep administrative reform. The offices of “Overseer of Upper Egypt” (*im-r3 šmw*) were abolished (Vittmann 1978: pp. 189–200) while the temple of Amun was deprived of leaders. The institution of the God’s Wife of Amun disappeared (Ayad 2001). Distinct from the province of Thebes, Elephantine was promoted as capital of Tšetreš (the “South district,” dem. *t3 šdy.t rsy* = ar. *tštrs*), perhaps an Achaemenid-era construct. In 485 BCE, Tšetreš was headed by someone called Parnu (dem. *Prnw*, OP Farnavā), who bears the titles of “he of Tšetreš, to whom the fortress of Syena is entrusted” (P. Berlin 13 582 2–3; Kuhrt 2007: p. 706 nr. 14).

Nome, as administrative level, is not particularly attested in Egyptian sources. But the cities’ and villages’ administration appear in our sources as if town authorities were directly subordinate to the satrap. In Elephantine, the governor bears the Aramaic title of *segan*, which derived from Babylonian *šiknu* “Chief” (TADAE II B2.9: 4–5). Vidranga, the “Chief” of Elephantine in the late fifth century BCE, was promoted sometime before 410 BCE. He bears first the title of “Troop Commander” (*rab hayla*) and this position passed on to his son, Naphaina, when he became *segan* (Porten et al. 2011: p. 132 nr. 10). In this case, local power is shared between a civil governor and a military one. We can observe the same separation of powers in the Herakleopolite nome (Chauveau 2000: pp. 105–106). A complaint concerning the sacred ibis is addressed to the two-headed direction of Herakleopolis; the general (*mr mš'*) Ankhouahibre and someone called Arsekhen, probably the civil governor of the city. Under Xerxes, Coptos was headed by a “*sārīs* of Persians, governor of Coptos” (hierog. *srs n Prs rp'.t Gbtym*) named Athiyavahya (Posener 1936: pp. 120–121 nr. 26, 124 nr. 30; Tavernier 2007: p. 127 4.2.203, 4.2.205). In the Western Desert, the southern part of El-Kharge Oasis is placed under the control of the “governor of Douch” (dem. *p3 šln n Gš*) (O. Man. 6857; Chauveau and Agut-Labordère (2014) on achemenet.com).

Specialized Administrations

Army, Justice, and Police

A Persian field officer (dem. *p3 hry (n) p3 mš'*, “general”) installed in Memphis is known from a Demotic letter (Smith and Martin 2009: p. 49 nr. 10). His Egyptian colleague, the general Ahmose, son of Paiouenhor, was charged by Darius I with the supervision of the burial of an Apis bull in the Serapeum (Posener 1936: pp. 41–46 nr. 6). Nevertheless, the Egyptian title of *hry mš'* is

imprecise and Ahmose is perhaps the ordinary chief of the Serapeum police (Chauveau 2009: p. 126). Possibly, the troops based in Memphis were headed by a “garrison commander” (dem. *hry hṯh*, Smith and Martin 2009: pp. 49–50 nr. 11). Such military unities controlled the main Egyptian cities, such as Hermopolis, which was, in the 15th year of Darius I, under the orders of an Egyptian officer (Chauveau 2000). In Syena, the garrison commander (ar. *rab ḥaylā*) is named Rauka (TADAE II B5.1).

A text on the *verso* of the Demotic Chronicle recounts Darius’ commissioning of a collection of Egyptian laws (dem. *hp.w*). A late copy of this codification is kept in the Code of Hermopolis (first half of the third century BCE) (Lippert 2008: p. 85, 192). Through Aramaic, this legislation borrows from Persian terminology (Tavernier 2007: p. 442, 4.4.10.1). In Elephantine, judicial authorities were royal judges (ar. *dyny mlkʿ*) but also the chiefs of the royal administration or military officers (Wieschöfer 1991: p. 306). Thus, a legal proceeding could be presided over by the chief of the garrison, Vidranga (TADAE II B2.10, l. 4; Porten et al. 2011: pp. 196–199 B32). Another example is provided by a clause of validity of an Aramaic loan of silver which stipulates that no complaint might be raised “before the *seḡan* or the judge” (TADAE II, B3.11.18–19; Porten et al. 2011: pp. 203–205 B34). Judges (ar. DTBRʿ, OP *databara*) are also attested in two court records from Saqqara (Kuhrt 2007: pp. 851–852 nr. 28, 29). In small and isolated villages such as that situated at Ayn-Manawir, an official public protest (*šʿr*) is simply heard by all the local worthies supported by a vizir (*tb-n-mšʿ*) and the local *calasiris* (policeman) of Douch (O. Man. 5489; Chauveau and Agut-Labordère (2014) on achemenet.com). A list of 50 *calasiris* is attested in a Demotic Saqqara papyrus (Smith and Martin 2009: pp. 44–46 nr. 8.).

Fiscal System, Royal and Gods’ Estates

Documents on fiscal administration of Persian Egypt are fairly rare. In Elephantine, a receipt of 2 deben issued by the Persian Treasury is often connected with a tax levied by the king on appointees to the sacerdotal office (as Ptolemaic *telestikon*) (P. Berlin 13582; Kuhrt 2007: p. 706 nr. 14). A papyrus fragment found in Saqqara contains a reference to the tribute levied in kind connected with a Memphite garrison (ar. *mndh ḥaylā*) (Segal 1983: pp. 39–40 nr. 24; Kuhrt 2007: p. 715 nr. 30). We find also a tax on workers, “tax of the men,” levied according to the number of persons employed in a single year (Segal 1983: pp. 34–35 nr. 19). Two Aramaic tax accounts mention payment in money (Segal 1983: pp. 34–36 nr. 19–20). In Ayn Manawir, cultivators paid a “village tax” (dem. *šmw n dmi*, O. Man. 5583), which is clearly different from other levies devoted to the Great Oasis temples. In villages or in small communities, taxes were probably collected by “elders of the village”

(Segal 1983: pp. 37–38 nr. 22). According to an Aramaic custom account (TADAE III C1.1–2), tax revenue coming from the harbor of Thonis or Naukratis was transferred to the House of the King (*'byd 'l byt mlk'*) (Briant and Descat 1998: pp. 85–87).

Royal estates were made up of fields (*n3 3ḫ.w n Pr'3*, Smith and Martin 2009: p. 59 nr. 16), herds, storehouses, transport equipment (boats, donkeys), and natural areas such as lake and bushes. As we have seen above, the royal estate was managed by the satrap. In 427 BCE, some administrators of Elephantine wrote to him to acknowledge receipt of his orders (TADAE I A6.1; Porten et al. 2011 pp. 114–115 B10). The resupplying of the Elephantine garrison is the topic of an Aramaic document (TADAE II, B4.4; Kuhrt 2007: pp. 757–758 nr. 27) dated to 483 BCE. Barley and lentils were intended as ration in kind (ar. *ptp*) to soldiers: 18 men are paid with 2 artabas of barley and 4 men with $2 + \frac{2}{3}$ artabas. Accounts of the garrison of Syena-Elephantine in one year (TADAE III C3.14) mention barley coming from various locations (province of Thebes and Tšetreš) being distributed to soldiers as food rations. In addition, soldiers receive rations weighed in silver (*prs*) and plots of lands (ar. *mnt*) allocated by the administration. A letter indicates that scribes of the Elephantine royal warehouse were required to send each item of their accounts month by month to Memphis (TADAE I A6.1; Porten et al. 2011 pp. 114–115 B10). They were reimbursed by the satrap's office in Memphis on the basis of this document. A group of inspectors (**azdakara*) was responsible for overseeing the whole distribution procedure.

During his short reign over Egypt, Cambyses issued a decree canceling or reducing royal donations to the temples (Kuhrt 2007: pp. 125–127 nr. 14c; Agut-Labordère 2005a,b). At the same time, the raising of donation steles by kings ceased (Meeks 1979: pp. 653–654). Nevertheless, the Edfu cadaster records important royal gifts of land on account of Horus Behedeti under the rule of Darius II (Kurth et al. 2004: p. 402). The integrity of the royal land is protected by the “Overseer of lands” (dem. *mr-3ḫ*) already attested under Amasis (Chauveau 2009: pp. 128–129). Frequently associated with the title of *phritob* (Yoyotte 1989: p. 75), the “Overseer of lands” appears also alone (Saqqara, Smith, and Martin 2009: pp. 58–59 nr. 15). The function of his colleague, the *phritob* (*hry-wḏb*, “director of the banks”), is clearly illustrated by P. Berlin 13 536 (Chauveau 1999: p. 270 nr. 7) where he summons the chiefs of the Khnum temple in Elephantine to verify the accounts of the institution. Unlike the “Overseer of lands,” who is in charge of the cadaster, the *phritob* deals with budgetary control of sanctuaries. The reinforcement of economic supervision on the temples by the Achaemenid power may explain why the *artaba*, the Persian volume unit (around 30 l.), had supplanted the Egyptian one, the *khar* (around 99 l. and, then, 75 l.) in use since the Old Kingdom.

Administration in Multicultural Context

Iranians, Egyptians, and Others

In the Achaemenid period, Memphis and Elephantine were cosmopolitan cities. The onomastic pattern provides a broad picture of these imperial societies dominated by Persians (Briant 1988; Vittmann 2003). Thus, Iranian names are held by satraps and high military officials (*p3 ḥry (n) p3 mš*) such as *Myṯraxa- (*Čiṯraxa-) (dem. *Mytrḥ3/Šytrḥ3*) who appears in a Demotic letter (Tavernier 2007: p. 253 4.2.1125). Nevertheless, as for the Ptolemaic period, we have to be cautious with ethnic conclusions based on personal names. In fact, some Persians could also bear Egyptian names such as Aryavarta/Djedher (Posener 1936: p. 128 nr. 33, 178) and an Iranian father could give an Egyptian name to his child. Thus, Djedherbes, known from a funerary stele found in Saqqara, is the son of someone called Artama (Vittmann 2009: pp. 104–105 Fig. 7; here Fig. 20.6). Egyptian name bearers are not completely excluded from power. As seen above, the chief of the garrison of Hermopolis was named Ankhoubre, and Herodotos (4.167.1) mentions a mysterious general, Amasis the Maraphian. As a general rule, Egyptians are in charge of agricultural and transport matters. For example, the two stewards of Aršama were Psammešek and Neḥtihor and the boatman is called Espemet son of Pefteuoneith (TADAE II B4.4; Kuhrt 2007: pp. 757–758 nr. 27). Otherwise, the names entered in this account book are also Judean, and Iranian and non-Iranian, providing an angle on the admixture in Achaemenid Egypt which is unexpected. The chief of the troop detachment in Egypt bears an Anatolian name, Armapiya (TADAE I A6.8; Kuhrt 2007: pp. 816–817 nr. 60iii). Cilicians may also have been present in Aršama's estate (TADAE I A6.7; Kuhrt 2007: pp. 343–344 nr. 34). The ethnic mix of Egyptian, Persian, Semitic, and other foreign names is also attested in Saqqara Demotic and Aramaic documents.

Writing, Aramaic, and Demotic

Administration of Persian Egypt is multilingual and communicates via translated messages. Thus the collection of Egyptian laws gathered by order of Darius I had to be translated into Aramaic, the lingua franca of the Achaemenid Empire, and Demotic (P. Bn. Égypte 215 verso b l. 14; Kuhrt 2007: p. 125). In practice, official proceedings were written in Demotic as well as in Aramaic. Saqqara Demotic papyri provide us with documented examples of transliteration of Achaemenid administrative titles in Egyptian via Aramaic (Vittmann 2004: pp. 131–139, 168). Note that Iranian scribes wrote generally in Aramaic (Vittmann 2009: p. 104 nr. 77) and perhaps in Demotic (Vittmann 2009: pp. 102–103). Aramaic/Demotic papyri are extremely rare (P. LSA 03/143; Chauveau and Lemaire 2008).

Satrap and Ethnic Clashes

The series of documents concerned with the violent quarrel between Jews and Egyptians adherents of god Khnum may serve as case study of Persian intervention in inter-ethnic conflict (Kuhrt 2007: p. 855–859 nr. 32). The issue may have been a desecration of sacred space of the Yahweh temple by Egyptians (Briant 1996). As Jews were unable to produce proof of their entitlement to the terrain occupied by their temple, the local Persian commander ordered the destruction of the building. The Jews turned to the satrap Aršama and community leaders in Jerusalem and Samaria. After three years, they received permission to reconstruct the temple but they had to pay compensation to the satrap's treasury. The building area was subject to satrap surveillance. The Persian authorities wanted to prevent any counterclaims by the Egyptians and at last preserve peace between the two communities.

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CHAPTER 65

Asia Minor

Christian Marek

Generally, “administration” in the context of ancient empires is difficult to define (Frei ²1996: p. 9).¹ What we know about Anatolia under Persian rule² for the most part we owe to Greek literature. It provides historians with abundant but at the same time problematic evidence, for Greek views of Persian domination are not only selective and interpretative but occasionally imprecise, erroneous, and reserved or hostile too (e.g. Isoc. 4.150–153). Nevertheless, authors like Herodotus, Xenophon, Ctesias were quite familiar with conditions in Asia. It is pointless to lament over the notorious Hellenocentricity of the evidence (see the reasonable remarks of Debord 1999: pp. 19–20). Archeology makes a complementary contribution to our topic (Dusinberre 2013; Boardman 2000; cf. Marek 2016: pp. 15–173). But, since in the Greek *poleis* as well as in communities of their neighboring peoples administrative acts produced written records, some of which were cut into stone, we possess precious finds of authentic documents (Briant 2001). To them we may add the coinage minted by satraps and dynasts (Mildenberg 1993). Documentary evidence of course is isolated and bound to a local perspective. Particularly with respect to local administration we must be aware of possible regional divergencies rooted in different traditions and models of communal life. The system was based on personal relationships rather than on institutions. The masters of the Persian Empire no doubt had at their command personnel of different ranks at different levels, the art of writing and archival practices (Dusinberre 2013: pp. 63–69) being employed at each of them.

A Companion to the Achaemenid Persian Empire, Volume II, First Edition.

Edited by Bruno Jacobs and Robert Rollinger.

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Officers and Vassals

The conquered land from Ararat to the mouth of the Maiandros was ruled by a number of governors appointed by and directly responsible to the Great King. In one case it is reported that the choice was made according to the request of the local population (Xen. Cyr. 8.6.7–8). The word “satrap” stems from one of the languages of ancient Iran and its meaning in Old Persian is “protector of lordship” (Schmitt 1976). Attested only twice in Old Persian outside Asia Minor (Schmitt 1991: DB III pp. 13–14 and 56–57), it is frequently used in transliteration by Greek and Latin writers and in Greek, Lydian, Lycian, and Aramaic inscriptions found in Anatolia. Where it is applied in its technical meaning, and where not, is a matter of scholarly debate, since even writers contemporary to Achaemenid administration reveal some ambiguity of its employment (Weiskopf 1982: pp. 5–13). Herodotus avoids it altogether and speaks of “subordinate officers” (*hyparchoi*) even where clearly a satrap is meant (e.g. 6.1.42). Thucydides prefers the title *strategoi*. Xenophon, who occasionally applies *hyparchos* or *strategos* to rulers of satrapies, makes use of the word “satrap,” but by it he irritatingly also designates individuals who surely did not rule a satrapy (Hell. 3.1.10,12). In the language of Diodorus the title appears to be replaceable by others such as *strategos*, *hegemon*, but where applied it exclusively refers to Iranians. Diodorus (15.90.3; 16.7.3; 16.35.2) consequently calls Maussollos, the Carian whom inscriptions attest as satrap, “dynast.” Strabo (14.2.17) calls him “king.” Designation of satraps in the inscriptions is not uniform either. On the Payava sarcophagus from Xanthos to the name of Autophradates in Lycian (partly restored) is added *χssadrapa* (TAM I 40d), but a Lycian rock-cut tomb near Phellos refers to the same as *χñtawata wataprddatehe* (TAM I 61). A more recently published Lydian document names the satrap Rhoisakes (*rasakaś śatrabaś*) (Gusmani and Akkan 2004). And in a series of Greek decrees of Carian communities under the Hecatomnids, the regnal year of the Great King is followed by the name of the ruling satrap (e.g. Tralleis SEG 15, 665). King Darius I seems to have addressed Gadatas – whom scholars assume to be a satrap of Ionia – without this title. Instead, the Greek inscription has “slave” (δοῦλος), possibly an unsuitable translation of Persian *bandaka*.³

Two instances of the use of the title are extraordinarily difficult to interpret. Firstly, in a Greek inscription from Sardeis dated to the 39th year of a king Artaxerxes (427/6 BCE, or 366/5 BCE), the Iranian Droaphernes is called ὑπαρχος Λυδίας. Although this designation, if correct, does not match an Iranian officer other than the satrap of Sparda, scholars were reluctant to accept the editor’s interpretation (Robert 1989: pp. 487, 491), pointing out that the reign of Sparda at the time of either year is fixed to the names of other satraps (Weiskopf 1982: pp. 98–107; Debord 1999: pp. 171–172, 367–373). Uncertainty prevails.

Secondly, we may quote the famous trilingual inscription from the Letoon. Its Lycian version begins *ēke: trñmisñ: xssaθrapazate: pigesere* – “when Pigesere ruled Lycia as satrap” (transl. Melchert), the Greek: Ἐπεὶ Λυκίας ξαδράπης ἐγένετο Πιξώδαρος – “when Pixodaros became satrap of Lycia”; the Aramaic text differs from both, naming Pixodaros as satrap “who (is) in Caria and Lycia” preceded by the regnal date 1 of a king Artaxerxes: *šnt ḥd ʾrthšš mlkʾ* and *pgswd[r] br ktmnw ḥštrpnʾ zj bkrk wtrmjł* (Frei ²1996: p. 13 no. 13). Pixodaros was not ruler of Caria before 341 BCE. To escape the conflict which a date of 359 BCE – year 1 of Artaxerxes III – would impose, the regnal year was applied by Badian (1977) *not* to this ruler but to his successor, known by the name Arsēs (338–336 BCE). Although widely accepted, there are strong arguments against this (Domingo Gygax 2001: pp. 19–20. no. 6). An appointment of Pixodaros as satrap of Lycia (not Caria) in 359 BCE may coincide with the extension of Hecatomnid rule to Lycia that was generally assigned to the period of Maussollos 377/6–353/2 BCE (Hornblower 1982: p. 121; Tietz 2009: p. 167) and has recently been confirmed by a coin Maussollos had struck in Xanthos (Kolb 2008: p. 158 with no. 595). But since Maussollos was satrap of the extended dominion, the Aramaic text referring to his brother as “satrap who (is) in Caria and Lycia” would suggest some sort of co-regency not known from other sources.

Besides satraps, the Greek sources mention Iranian and non-Iranian officers concerned with various functions (Debord 1999: pp. 172–176). As a special case of superior ranking Cyrus the Younger stands out. Cyrus was sent by his father as “satrap of Lydia, Greater Phrygia and Cappadocia,” and he was appointed *strategos* of all the troops gathering in the plain of Kastolos (Xen. Anab. 1.9.7). Xenophon elsewhere (Hell. 1.4.3) refers to Cyrus’ position as “*karanos* of those gathering in Kastolos,” and he adds his explanation of the title *karanos*, meaning “master”: τὸ δὲ κάρανον ἔστι κύριον. Exceptional, comprehensive authority on behalf of the king has parallels in the later history of Anatolia, from the Seleucid ἀπολελειμμένος ὑπὸ τοῦ βασιλέως ἐπὶ τῶν ἐπιτάδε τοῦ Ταύρου πραγμάτων (SEG 36, 973) to the *imperium maius* of Germanicus (Eck et al. 1996: 40 lines pp. 30–35, cf. 158). Other cases of officers ranking higher than satraps are not known. Pharnabazos, considering the possibility that the king might dispatch someone to whom he would be subordinate (Hell. 4.1.37), seems to have had the *karanos* in mind.

It was perhaps the satrap of Sparda (Lydia) at the end of the fifth century BCE who entrusted two officers, Artembares and Mithrapates, with the control of Lycia (Hornblower 1982: pp. 181–182; cf. Debord 1999: p. 174). In fourth-century Ionia, a certain Tigranes is active (Dem. 15.9; Xen. Hell. 4.8.21), in Aiolis, the Greek Zenis (Hell. 3.1.10). When Pixodaros became satrap of Lycia he appointed two Greeks as “leaders” (*archontes*) of the country and a Lycian as “supervisor” (*epimeletes*) of Xanthos, the principal city.

Military arrangements were of particular importance. Commanders (*phrurarchoi* and *chiliarchoi*) of strategically significant strongpoints (Xen. Anab. 1.4.4), of garrisons on acropoleis in cities or at satrapal residences, were subordinate directly to the king (Xen. Cyr. 8.6.9). Conflict even with the *karanos* could arise (Xen. Anab. 1.6.6). Availability of professionally equipped troops in the extensive territories under Persian control was limited. During campaigns or in case of attack, reinforcements came from tribal chiefs, dynasts, or tyrants of cities as well as some Iranian landlords mobilizing their peasantry in the vicinity. Regarding the protection of an Iranian estate under sudden attack, there is an informative story in Xenophon (Anab. 7.8.7–23). When the Greek mercenary force in the plain near Pergamon advanced where Asidates and his family had their property, the landlord managed to call for help from a nearby troop under the command of a Persian officer, Itamenes (for discussion of different views, see Debord 1999: p. 184). The attackers were forced to retreat. But a second attempt was successful. Asidates, his family, and herds fell into their hands because the landlord had launched a campaign apparently without sufficient manpower of professional soldiers.

Iranian officers with civil functions subordinate to the satraps are mentioned rarely. The “royal judges” known from Egypt (Hdt. 3.31) may have been active at satrapal residences in Asia Minor too, as undoubtedly the royal secretaries were (Hdt. 3.128.3).⁴ Another special case is the roving investigatory officers, the famous “eyes of the king,” setting out with military escort on their inspection tour to the satrapies every year (Xen. Cyr. 8.6.16. Weiskopf 1982: p. 48).

As far as Iranian officers sent to or settled in the satrapies of Anatolia are concerned, personnel coverage does not go beyond this. Presumably it was much thinner than the Roman one governing the same country later (Marek 2016: p. 367). As the Roman administrators, the Persians to a considerable measure had to rely upon regional or local authorities. The story of Mania in Xenophon is enlightening (Hell. 3.1.10–15). After the death of her husband, Zenis, this woman gained the satrap’s acknowledgement, respect, and protection; Pharnabazos entrusted her with control of parts of the Aiolis, including the country’s resources. He expected from her military support, regular payment of tribute, gifts, appropriate reception, and reverence at meetings.

In their dominions the satraps had to communicate with governments of different kinds of indigenous communities. Priests administered large temple-states. Strabo’s description of Zela, Kabeira, and Komana in Cappadocia refers to the Hellenistic period but may be true for the Persian period as well (1.8.4, 12.3.30–32, 36, 37). The priest of the sanctuary of *Men* and *Selene* with its “village-town” (*komopolis*) Ameria, situated in the vicinity of a royal residence (*basileion*) Kabeira, collected the revenues from temple land cultivated by serfs, the *hieroduloi*. At nearby Komana where Ma-Enyo was venerated, as

well as agriculture the service to the goddess included sacred prostitution. Her high priest had the right to wear the diadem during processions.

Tribal chiefs and leaders of indigenous peoples such as Thynians, Bebrykes, Mariandynoi, Kaukonians, Henetoi (Str. 12.3.3–5), regional governors like Zenis and Mania in Aiolis, dynasts like Korylas or Otys in Paphlagonia, Aspis in Cataonia finally the tyrants ruling the majority of Greek cities (Hdt. 4, 138), were personally responsible to the satrap, some to the king. But not in all Greek *poleis* could the satraps address tyrants. Sinope in the middle of the fourth century BCE was a democracy (I. Sinope 1, cf. Marek 2016: p. 156). And constitutional citizenries were not exclusively Greek, as the case of Lycian Xanthos proves. Confederative organizations must be added, such as the reestablished *koinon* of the Ionians (Str. 8.7.2) or a *koinon* of the Carians (Bresson et al. 2001: pp. 216–222. no. 90, 91; cf. Debord 1999: pp. 178–181). Self-administration at the level of villages is not known in detail, but evidence from later periods in the history of Anatolia suggests that it may have existed. The Greeks of Xenophon were received by “mayors” in the villages of Armenia (κομάρχαι, ἄρχοντες τῆς κώμης: Anab. 4.5.9–6.3).

As centuries later Rome considered the dominions ruled by her client kings in Anatolia to be part of her empire, so did the Great King with respect to all the indigenous principalities, tribal territories, or cities, whether loyal or recalcitrant. But like the first Roman emperors, the Achaemenids rejected the idea of exercising direct control in every corner of the peninsula as unnecessary and inopportune. Loyal vassals were treated like satraps and even acknowledged as satraps (e.g. the Hecatomnids in Caria and Lycia⁵) – only some were replaced later on occasion by Iranian officers: the so-called *Syennesis* of Cilicia, who perhaps lost his position for support of Cyrus the Younger, or the dynasts of Paphlagonia.

Notoriously independent, even rebellious, appear to have been the dynasts of Lycia in the fifth and early fourth centuries BCE (Isoc. 4.161–162), some of the Bithynians and Mysians, the Pisidians, the mountainous people in Lycaonia, Cataonia,⁶ and in the eastern Pontic highlands, as in Armenia the Karduchoi and others. As far as feasible, the Persian authorities attempted to force payment of tribute and recruitment of auxiliaries on subjects of that kind too, and if military force seemed hopeless or turned out to be unsuccessful, to play them off against each other, to negotiate contractual commitments and marriages, to pay them ransom money in order to secure their peacefulness (Weiskopf 1982: pp. 62–63; Schuler 1998: pp. 142–144). A very problematic zone was the coastal region with its Greek cities. The great powers of Greece intervened in the affairs of their relatives on the opposite coast of the Aegean by means of force and diplomacy, and during the fifth and early fourth centuries BCE they managed to incorporate many of them in a Greek ἀρχή, suspending the Persian domination for decades.

Provinces

Our sources attribute to those officers whom they explicitly call “satraps” or clearly distinguish as satraps various regions at different times. There is no Persian word denoting precisely what is transliterated into Greek by “satrapy” (σατραπή) and appears first in Herodotus (3, 89). Greek equivalents seem to be νομός, ἀρχή (Hdt. 3.89; Xen. Hell. 44.1), οἶκος (Plut. Ages. 13), βασιλεία (Diod. Sic. 15.90.3). The structure and history of the Achaemenid satrapy system remains a most controversial issue in modern scholarship which we do not discuss here. As far as Asia Minor is concerned (Debord 1999: pp. 69–165), a brief outline may suffice.

Two models are opposed to each other: stability and change. Scholars emphasizing stability over two centuries from the conquests by Cyrus down to the period of Alexander admit changes only at the level of subdivisions of satrapies (Nagel 1982; Jacobs 1994). The “great satrapy” Sparda covered almost the entire peninsula and was subdivided into a western (Sparda) and eastern (Katpatuka) “main satrapy,” each of which consisted of a number of “small satrapies”: Main Sparda of Lydia (with Ionia⁷), Hellespontic Phrygia (with a “sub-satrapy” Mysia), Caria (with Lycia), Great Phrygia, Katpatuka of Pontic Cappadocia, Cappadocia at the Tauros, Paphlagonia. Armenia and the peoples of East Pontus belong to the “great-satrapy” Māda, Cilicia to Bābiruš. We may object that the wording in ancient texts does not support a terminology such as “great-,” “main-,” “small-,” or “sub-satrapy.” Occasionally more than one satrapy appears to have been united for some time under the rule of a sole satrap, and there is evidence for “governors” of a limited area within a satrapy who are called “satraps” or given other titles (Debord 1999: pp. 170–171). But there seems to be no indication for a regular satrapal hierarchy according to which satraps ruled over satraps.

It seems more plausible to assume that kings at times changed the system, multiplying the satrapies by splitting some and adding new ones. Originally, satrapies were “given” to the king’s relatives and friends among the Iranian nobility, and in some known instances (Dascylium, Caria) they were hereditary. Large territories like Sparda or Katpatuka must have favored a tendency toward decentralization; to meet the requirements of government, satraps alternated between different residences (Hdt. 3.121, 126). Thus Sparda was split into Lydia and Ionia, the central and northern plateau into Mysia, Phrygia at the Hellespont, Greater Phrygia and Paphlagonia,⁸ Cappadocia (Str. 12.1.4) into a satrapy at the Pontos and one at the Tauros (this southern portion is understood as part of “Cilicia” by Herodotus 1.72; 5.52, and Nep. Dat. 1.1), the eastern plateau into West and East Armenia.

Geographic reaches of satrapies were defined by natural boundaries such as mountain ranges, rivers, coastlines, and islands, the dwellings of peoples, and

tribes. A precise demarcation as attested for Roman provinces is not known, and a satrap's legal authority apparently did not expire at the crossing of borders. Certain regions became objects of dispute between neighboring rulers, such as Aiolis between the satraps of Dascylium and Sardeis (Weiskopf 1982: pp. 43–44; Debord 1999: p. 25).

Our knowledge of satrapal residences in Anatolia still is very limited (Knauf 2011). Classical authors give some idea of their physical appearance. In the center of the complexes lay the *basileia* (Weiskopf 1982: p. 50). With the exception of few remains in Halikarnassos (Pedersen 2009) and Dascylium (Bakır 2001), substantial building structures did not survive in Asia Minor. In Sardeis, Lydian structures were used into the Achaemenid period (Dusinberre 2003). Lysander admired the famous game parks and landscape gardens (Dusinberre 2013: pp. 54–56) in the vicinity called *paradeisoi* by the Greeks: “the trees were planted at equal intervals in straight rows and all at regular angles, and many sweet fragrances wafted about them.”⁹ Among the most important finds of the excavations at Dascylium are the numerous *bullae* attesting to intensive correspondence of the chancery (Kaptan 2002). Pergamon's ruins reveal nothing of the seat of the Achaemenid governor of Mysia (Diod. Sic. 15.90.3; OGIS 264; Debord 1999: pp. 149–152). In Greater Phrygia, the satrap resided at Kelainai (Dinar). Among the ancient remains no traces allow for an exact location of his domicile (Summerer et al. 2011). However, the site must have had two *basileia*, a complex near the source of the river Marsyas built by Xerxes on his return from Greece and another one of Cyrus the Younger (Xen. Anab. 1.27–8). Further locations can be only approximately determined: The administrative center of Cappadocia at the Tauros down to the Hellenistic and Roman periods was Mazaka, not far away from the ancient Assyrian trading colony Kārum Kaneš. Satrapal residences of Cappadocia at the Pontos and Paphlagonia may be located at Gaziura (Turhal) and Gangra (Çankırı) (Debord 1999: pp. 88, 110). Xenophon's Ten Thousand advanced from the lands of the Karduchoi into the satrapy of West Armenia and saw several *basileia* with rich villages (Anab. 4.4.1, 7), though none can be fixed on a map (Lendle 1995: pp. 223, 226). Whether structures that archeology unearthed at Altintepe were used as Achaemenid satrapal residence is uncertain (Dusinberre 2013: pp. 59–60). And nothing is known of a residence in East Armenia (Jacobs 1994: pp. 183–186). The plain of Cilicia, south of the Tauros range, was ruled from Tarsos (Casabonne 2004).

Activities and Responsibilities

As the great king bound his satraps, so the satraps bound their Iranian officers and the indigenous governors to observance of principles of personal loyalty. The basic text is a statement of Xenophon (Cyr. 8.6.10, transl. Miller),

according to which Cyrus “gave orders to all the satraps he sent out to imitate him in everything they saw him do: they were, in the first place, to organize companies of cavalry and charioteers from the Persians who went with them and from the allies; to require as many as received lands and palaces to attend at the satrap’s court and exercising proper self-restraint to put themselves at his disposal in whatever he demanded; to have the boys that were born to them educated at the local court, just as was done at the royal court; and to take the retinue at his gates out hunting and to exercise himself and them in the arts of war.”

The satraps’ duties embraced military, diplomatic, and administrative activities. In the first place, they were responsible for the maintenance of Persian power and the collection of tribute (Thuc. 8.5.5–6; Xen. Cyr. 8.6.3). For campaigning in- and outside of their satrapies they were provided with military forces at their disposal. At the dawn of the Ionian Revolt, Artaphernes disposed of a large army and many warships (Hdt 5.30.5), Maussollos possessed a fleet (Hornblower 1982: p. 166). They were also expected to make most productive use of resources and particularly to promote agriculture. Xenophon has Socrates saying (Oec. 4.8, transl. Pomeroy): “And those governors whom he [the king] observes presenting densely populated land and fields under cultivation stocked with the trees and crops that grow in that region, to these he gives additional territory and he lavishes gifts on them and rewards them with seats of honor; but those whose land he sees uncultivated and sparsely populated, because of the governors’ harshness or arrogance or lack of concern, he punishes, removing them from office and appointing other governors” (cf. *ibid.* pp. 20–25). That corresponds to what is said by Darius in his letter to Gadatas. The initiative to make dry lands arable by the installation of elaborate irrigation systems was rewarded with the enfeoffment for up to five generations (Polyb. 10.28.3).

Cities and dynasts, and from the late fifth century BCE also satraps, emitted coinage which we do not discuss here in detail (Debord 1999: pp. 50–65; Dusinger 2013: pp. 72–76). A particular accumulation of dynastic coinage occurs in Lycia (Olçay and Mørholm 1971; Kolb and Tietz 2001); some 50 names of Lycian dynasts are attested on coins, among them Iranian names: *Artumpara*, *Erbhina*, *Mithrapates*. The dynastic Lycian coinage ceases after Perikles of Limyra, which has been explained by the rise to power of the Carian Hecatomnids; this family continued striking coins throughout the fourth century BCE.

If we believe Ephoros (Diod. Sic. 15.41.5), any activity of the satraps needed to obtain the king’s approval: “they refer all matters to the king and await his replies concerning every detail.” This matches the famous statement of Aelius Aristides concerning the Roman provincial governors (Or. 26.32 transl. Behr): “when these have even some small doubt they send to him [i.e. the

Emperor], asking what should be done, and they wait for his signal, no less than a chorus waits upon his teacher.” However, the satraps’ scope for independent action must have been considerable.

There is evidence for a satrap’s formal authorization of legal acts decided by local communities: c. 390 BCE in a territorial dispute between Miletus and Myus, after he had heard the judges of the Ionian League, Struthas confirmed their decision in favor of the Milesians and thereby made it legally effective (Syll.³ 134). A similar procedure has been identified in the last paragraph of the trilingual inscription from the Letoon at Xanthos: Πιζώταρος δὲ κύριος ἔστω. Peter Frei interpreted this as a formal act incorporating local law into an imperial legal framework, and he pointed out some parallels outside Asia Minor.¹⁰ The *hyparchos* Droaphernes in Sardeis and the satrap Asandros in Amyzon intervened in local decision procedures concerning matters of cult where an Iranian *bagabuxša* was involved.¹¹ Cults were also endowed by satraps as (probably) the one of the moon god called “the *Men* of Pharnakes,” which may refer to the known ruler at Dascylium at the end of the fifth century BCE (Str. 12.3.31). Artaphernes of Sardeis ordered the ambassadors of Ionian cities to stipulate treaties, to resolve their future disputes peacefully, and to cease looting each other (Hdt. 6.42). Subjects were free to conclude even treaties of alliance that guaranteed military aid against invaders; the obligation became void in case the attacker was the king (I. Sinope no. 1). Comparable exceptions apply to the limits of local financial administration (see below).

Property of Land and Tribute

The question of property of land has caused controversy. What does Darius in his letter to Gadatas mean by the notion “my land”?³ Did the Great King generally respect local ownership structures and confine his ownership to domains which he had confiscated after conquest or for reasons of punishment, and were these royal domains the only source of his gifts of land? Or, more probably, did the Great King consider himself as the rightful owner of *all* land of the empire? In that case his satraps, relatives, nobles, distinguished officers, and the majority of the indigenous vassals were but enfeoffed the land they had been given or inherited from their ancestors (Marek 2016: p. 160).

Although the king could dispose of any property any time, seen as a whole, land ownership must have remained untouched. His subjects normally bequeathed their domains to their descendants, but there is no proof for an alienability of the land (Hornblower 1982: p. 160; Weiskopf 1982: p. 24). Cyrus the Great is praised to have surpassed all other kings with his generous gifts (Xen. Cyr. 8.2.7), such as the revenues of seven cities (Agathocl. FGrH 472 F 6); quite a number of recipients of similar gifts are reported in Classical

literature.¹² This has been interpreted as a kind of appanage system which probably was stepped further down according to relationships on a regional and local basis.¹³ Certainly, the *doreai* awarded to strangers in Anatolia, Greeks, Iranians, or others must have been linked with expropriations. Whether these caused the Ionian Revolt cannot be substantiated (Hornblower 1982: p. 143).

After the Persian conquest of Anatolia, an increasing number of Iranians settled in that country. Their long-term presence is attested in our sources by cult, place, and personal names (whether indicating Iranian families or merely name fashions) down to the Roman imperial period. A plain “of Kyros” or a “Hyrkanian” plain in Lydia bear names that surely go back to Iranian colonization (Str. 13.4.13) as well as villages of the *Maibozanoi*, *Kardakoi*, *Dareukometai* (Schuler 1998: p. 147; Debord 1999: pp. 193–196). Cimon cunningly managed the ransom of his Iranian captives by their rich relatives living in neighboring Phrygia and Lydia (Plut. Cim. 9.2–4).

Contrary to a theory proposed by scholars (Hornblower 1982: pp. 163–164; Ste Croix 1972: pp. 313–314), the Persian overlords of Asia Minor did not make a distinction between royal and polis territory, hence the view of Persian royal territory being the predecessor of the Hellenistic χώρα βασιλική must be rejected (Schuler 1998: pp. 137–142). Classical authors, it is true, may cling to the notion of polis and empire being separate things, but they either refer to conditions under the Athenian *arche* or simply reflect a one-sided Greek perspective. The Persian opinion as expressed in the famous King’s Peace of 386 BCE (Xen. Hell. 5.1.31) is clear enough: The cities of Asia should belong to the Great King. There was no difference from other units of the Persian Empire regarding their tax liability. The satrap of Sardeis, Artaphernes, had the territories of the Ionian cities surveyed; perhaps a detailed land registry was kept in his chancery (Hdt. 6.42).

Much has been written on the “système tributaire” (Debord 1999: pp. 41–44.; Briant 1996: pp. 399–433; Briant and Herrens Schmidt 1989; Descat 1985). According to Herodotus, its organization was based on the satrapy system¹⁴ and was reformed together with that system under Darius I. Classical authors speak of two components, tribute and gifts, but when and where which of the two was applied is not entirely elucidated. Regarding their policy of taxation, the historian (3.89), allegedly quoting Persian opinion, characterizes three subsequent kings, Cyrus, Cambyses, and Darius, as “father” (πατήρ), “master” (δεσπότης), and “huckster” (κάπηλος), the latter’s image being marred by his introduction of accurately calculated tributes in gold and silver.

The payment of tribute was surely imposed from the beginning, under Cyrus the Great. Darius’ reform may have consisted, inter alia, of a more sophisticated assessment of sums at the level of cities, peoples, and tribes; collection was the satraps’ responsibility (Polyaen. 7.11.3 cf. Plut. Mor. 172F).

They apparently faced regular shortcomings and were concerned at getting hold of the amount they had fixed, since various anecdotes describe their trickery in order to achieve it (Polyaen. 7.23.1; [Arist.] Oec. 1348a 4–34).

Varying tightness of Persian control from region to region, recalcitrance, or secession must have had an effect on fluctuation of income. Most of the Greek cities dropped out for decades. According to Ephoros (Diod. Sic. 15.90.4), the Great Satraps' Revolt is supposed to have cut the royal revenues to half.

Herodotus' estimated sums for every one of the 20 satrapies, if accurate, seem to represent the net totals after subtraction of payments for troops and satrapal personnel (Hornblower 1982: p. 155). Payment was made in gold, silver, kind, or services. A classification of satrapal "economy" is given by the Ps. Aristotelian *Oeconomica* (1345b 28–1346a 5). Revenues comprised agricultural products (*ekphorion*), treasures of the soil, market, and customs duties, toll, taxes on land and on sales, revenue from cattle, and others. Gold and silver coins perhaps were preponderantly accumulated in deposits at temples and satrapal treasuries. At the lowest level, from the peasant farmer to the landlord, tribute was generally paid in kind, not money. Two documents are illuminating, the so-called Mnesimachus inscription from Sardis and an inscription of Aigai in Aiolis from the late Persian or early Hellenistic period.¹⁵ In the latter persons are named who "receive" and who "give." In the first place the tithe is mentioned. Fruits of trees are taxed at a rate of 1/8 from the harvest, sheep and goats 2/100, additionally a lamb and goat kid, from bee-hives 1/8, from hunters' catches one haunch per wild boar and deer. Certain lands like Cilicia and Armenia delivered large numbers of horses and foals (Hdt. 3.90.3; Xen. Anab. 1.26.3; 27.4; 4.5.24–34; Str. 11.14.9). From local production and collection centers (Jacobs 1994: p. 95 no. 26–29) the deliveries in kind, if not directed to military units, ended up in guarded storage houses at the satrapal residences. From there regular caravans set out to the Great King (Nep. Dat. 4).

Down to the level of villages the system included particular services. The evidence is scanty but alludes to conditions we know much better from the Roman Imperial period. For instance, at an expense measured according to the number of inhabitants, settlements were obliged to host the traveling king and his entourage (Theopomp. FGrH 115 F 113). In Armenia, villagers had to provide for accommodation of officers and soldiers (Xen. An. 4.5.9–6.3). At the famous Royal Road from Sardeis to Susa, local authorities had to maintain 111 stations and allocate the resources needed by traveling officers and agents.¹⁶ Responsibility for their provision with passports presumably also rested with the satraps (Hornblower 1982: p. 156). Off the main road other "royal" roads (βασιλικαὶ ὁδοί) existed in the satrapies which had to be maintained ([Arist.] Oec. 1348a 25). For unpaid horse and cart work and other services, according to the inscription of Aigai, the persons liable or their slaves

received subsistence from royal funds. It is not clear whether those who had received *doreai* according to the abovementioned appanage system were also obliged to pay tribute; the priest in possession of the holy land of Apollon in the satrapy of Gادات was not.

Beyond the royal “système tributaire” the satraps themselves and various types of communities administered their own autonomous finances ([Arist.] Oec. 1346a 6–9). This was permitted by the central power to an extent where no conflict would arise with the tax liability. Some documents from Caria and Lycia in the fourth century BCE and the early Hellenistic period attest to that: Maussollos and Artemisia granted *ateleia* limited to the field of Maussollos’ competence *ὁπόσης Μαύσσωλλος ἄρχει* (Crampa 1969–1972: no. 40). The Plataseis in Caria and the citizens of Limyra in Lycia in their honorary decrees confine the grant of tax exemption in a similar way, excluding any “royal” taxes.¹⁷ Interestingly, in the trilingual document of the Xanthians and their *perioikoi*, the Aramaic translation skips financial regulations detailed in Lycian and Greek that had no effect on royal taxation (Frei 1996: pp. 41–43).

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I wish to thank U. Kunnert, M. Gander, and Emanuel Zingg for helpful criticism.

NOTES

- 1 For previous discussions of the same topic see especially Weiskopf (1982); Hornblower (1982): chapter VI; Jacobs (1994); Frei (²1996); Schuler (1996): chapter V; Debord (1999): chapters I–IV; Briant (2006); Marek (2015); Marek (2016): 153–73. There is surprisingly little on the Persian period in the *Oxford Handbook of Ancient Anatolia* (2011) ed. by S.R. Steadman and G. McMahon.
- 2 Different from what is suggested by Hdt. 1.153, the conquest of Sardis apparently took place later than the fall of Babylon: Oelsner 1999/2000: pp. 378–380. Cf. Ehrhardt 2005: p. 106 no. 108.
- 3 Meiggs and Lewis 1969: no. 12. On this inscription see Briant (2003): pp. 107–144; Lane Fox (2006): pp. 149–171. For *bandaka* see Debord (1999): p. 27 no. 42: “ce terme signifie ‘vassaux.’ La traduction par ‘esclave’ est donc une grave déformation de la réalité.”
- 4 The φοινικιστῆς βασιλείος mentioned by Xen. An. 1.2.20 perhaps is a secretary, see Hornblower (1982): p. 150 and no. 100–101.
- 5 The Hecatomnids are denied the status of satraps by Petit 1988. But see Debord (1999): pp. 27–28; Frei (²1996): pp. 44–45; see also Marek (2015).

- 6 A rebel named Aspis pillaged the settlements of the region and looted the caravans on the way to the Great King: Nepos Dat. 4.
- 7 For the problem of a tripartite Yauna in Old Persian sources see Jacobs (1994): pp. 128–130; Debord (1999): pp. 116–130; Sancisi-Weerdenburg (2001): pp. 1–11.
- 8 Weiskopf (1982): p. 11 denies the existence of a satrapy Paphlagonia; but see Debord (1999): pp. 110–115.
- 9 Xen. Oec. 4.25 transl. Pomeroy. Cf. Hell. 4.1.15–16. On the *paradeisoî* see Schuler (1998): pp. 123–125.
- 10 Frei (²1996). For different views see Debord (1999): p. 67, and Kottsieper (2002): p. 209.
- 11 Robert and Robert (1983): p. 97 no. 2; Robert (1989): pp. 487, 491; Debord (1999): pp. 367–374; Briant (2006): p. 329. Marek (2016): pp. 162, 647 no. 45. For the *Megabyzos* at Ephesos see I. Priene 3.231. Strabo 14.1.23.
- 12 Plut. Them. 29.7; Hdt. 6.70, 8.136.1; Xen. Hell. 3.1.6; Nepos Alc. 9.2; Debord (1999): pp. 188–193; Briant (1985); Wörrle (1978): pp. 208–209.
- 13 The terminology introduced by Sekunda has been criticized as inadequate by Schuler (1998): pp. 150–151. For the relationship of a landlord to his satraps in Pontic Cappadocia see Maier (1959): no. 79. The inscription is dated to the early Hellenistic period.
- 14 A different view according to which satrapies and taxing districts were separate units: Junge (1942).
- 15 I. Sardeis 1. Malay (1983): pp. 349–353.
- 16 Cf. the Roman *cursus publicus* in Asia Minor Marek (2016): pp. 380–381.
- 17 Plataseis: Bresson et al. 2001: no. 48. Limyra: SEG 27, 929. See also SEG 26: 1229; Robert 1949: pp. 63–64.

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- See also the literature quoted in note 1.

CHAPTER 66

Bactria

Holger Gzella

Introduction

The name Bactria, Old Persian *bāxtriš*, Aramaic *bḥtry*, is first attested in Achaemenid sources such as the Bisotun inscription and the Persepolis tablets. It refers to a region located in the proverbially fertile (as already noted by ancient geographers) and thus economically important plain between the Hindu Kush to the southeast, both sides of the river Amu Darya, the ancient Oxus, to the north, and the river Murgab to the west, roughly corresponding to modern Afghanistan (cf. Figure 23.1); its later use as a geographical term was not always restricted to the Bactrian plain proper (Tomaschek 1896). The capital was Bactra (also called Zariaspa), modern Balkh, situated on the Silk Road in the center of the area. The archeological record in the eastern part points to a Bronze Age cluster of oasis communities that practiced irrigation agriculture, was then further extended in Achaemenid and Hellenistic times, and maintained trade contacts with Mesopotamia and India (for bibliographical information, see Mairs 2011: pp. 24–35).

Such activities would presuppose some form of centralized authority, and reflexes of this pristine civilization may underlie the tradition of a local kingdom (Leriche 1989; cf. Xen. Cyr. 5.1,2). Due to limited excavation from pre-Hellenistic strata, however, any specific system of administration preceding the annexation of the region to the empire by Cyrus the Great in the mid-sixth century BCE (Cyr. 1.1.4; Briant 2002: pp. 38–40) is hard to trace.

In the early Achaemenid period, Bactria formed, together with Margiana, an administrative unit, and the satrap of Bactria seems also to have exercised authority over Sogdiana beyond the Oxus to the north (Jacobs 1994: pp. 209–213; Briant 2002: pp. 745–747, 2009: p. 148 n. 32). Yet the extent of a satrapy could change over time, certainly in the second half of the fourth century. According to the archeological data available, the Persian conquest did not affect the continuity of material culture and hydraulic works: Achaemenid dominion appears to have been integrated into local traditions (Briant 2002: pp. 752–754).

Sources

Bits and pieces of information on a possibly feudal organization in Bactria that survived into Achaemenid times (Briant 2002: p. 750) and the names of various satraps over the years (Jacobs 1994: pp. 74–75) appear in classical sources. Some specific modalities of Persian local administration have only become clear after an archive of unknown provenance, belonging to a high Bactrian functionary, was discovered on the antiquities market. These documents, the “Khalili collection,” are composed in Official Aramaic (Gzella 2011, 2015: pp. 157–211); the dates mentioned in the texts themselves span the period between 353 and 324 BCE, that is, the last decades of Achaemenid rule up to the seventh year of Alexander the Great. They include an exchange of letters with a local governor and lists of allocations, both written on parchment and consisting of 30 documents in total (18 letters; 2 notes about a debt and receipt of goods; 8 lists of supplies; 2 fragments containing lists of Iranian personal names), as well as 18 wooden sticks with acknowledgments of debts. The material was acquired from several dealers in London and elsewhere around the year 2000. After a survey with a French translation of a few sample texts (Shaked 2004), the long-awaited official *editio princeps* was published (Naveh and Shaked 2012; cf. Gzella 2014). Any wide-ranging conclusions are thus preliminary.

Place names in the texts (Shaked 2003) point to a Bactrian origin, perhaps even to the provincial capital, but many of them remain unclear; hence their possible contribution to determining the geographical extent of the province at that time needs further investigation. Terminology and documentary practices indicate that Bactria was subject to the same system of imperial administration as the other provinces (Briant 2009: pp. 148–151). The most obvious points for comparison are Egypt and Samaria, both of which have also yielded substantial documentary material in Aramaic in the form of letters, contracts, and economic texts. Evidence from the heartland, especially the Persepolis Fortification and Treasury Archives, provides complementary insights into

the workings of administration at a more base level. The Khalili collection reflects a chancery standard in orthography, grammar, and phraseology that is virtually identical to the one underlying the rest of the Aramaic documents relating to provincial organization in Achaemenid times. Especially the consistent spelling of long consonants with the grapheme {n} (e.g. *'nt* for /'attā/ “you”), one of the most important innovations of Achaemenid Aramaic, gives these texts a distinctively official air. Moreover, they exhibit the same conservative rendering of the etymological voiced interdental /ð/, then presumably already pronounced /d/, with {z} (e.g. in the relative marker *zy* /dī/ or the masc.sg. near deictic *znh* /denā/ “this one”) instead of phonetic spelling with {d}, as became increasingly common in sub-standard scribal practice and in post-Achaemenid times. Similarly, the older causative-stem prefix *h-* (though supposedly no longer pronounced) instead of *'-* appears except for the “perfect” *'ytt* “you have brought” in B1:3 and perhaps the “imperfect” *tšgny* “you led me astray” (?) in B5:9, but some variation between older *h-* and more recent *'-* occurs elsewhere in Official Aramaic, too. The frequent use of a certain passive construction (e.g. A1:4; Naveh and Shaked 2012: p. 72) betrays the influence of a pragmatically dominant Iranian language; it appears to have entered Aramaic from there and was gradually extended due to ongoing contact (Gzella 2004: pp. 184–194). Such hallmarks reveal a by and large equally high-register form of Official Aramaic as in the letters on parchment issued by the Egyptian satrap Aršama (Whitehead 1978), with which the Khalili documents also share a larger number of Iranian loans, and the Samaritan slave-sale papyri (Gropp 1990; Gzella 2012: pp. 610–611). Terminology, too, is steeped in Achaemenid usage (see the relevant articles in Gzella [ed.] 2016).

At least some members of the administrative staff seem to have been recruited from the local population, since their names are not only Iranian throughout but also contain various references to regional elements, for instance the divine river Oxus (*whšw*) as a theophoric element in the case of the scribe Haš(y)avaxšu (*hšwhšw*; Naveh and Shaked 2012: pp. 51 and 58–59; for the wider onomastic context, cf. Sims-Williams 2010) and elsewhere. These functionaries seem to have learned Aramaic as part of their scribal training according to the largely centralized linguistic standard of the Achaemenid chancery, including genre conventions such as the general structure of a letter and the proper forms of address. Presumably, then, Aramaic in the east served as a professional, mostly written, idiom for official administrative purposes. This would account for the high number of Iranian borrowings and calques in both the Khalili and the Aršama letters as well as their absence in the Samaria papyri.

However, it remains doubtful whether the letters would have been dictated in Iranian and only recorded on the fly in Aramaic by the scribes (Naveh and Shaked 2012: pp. 50–51; Shaked 2004: pp. 23–27), or whether the mixture of Iranian and Aramaic elements reflects an institutionalized code similar to

the Latin adstrate in legal or medical technical language. It is thus difficult to say whether certain linguistic oddities, such as the lack of agreement between a singular subject and what appears to be a plural verb in C4:37.41, result from a growing disintegration of Aramaic (Naveh and Shaked 2012: pp. 51–52) or from the imperfect learning that can only be expected from scribes working at a provincial chancery. In that respect, the Aramaic Aśoka inscriptions, intended for public display in a similarly peripheral area, may furnish some comparative material (Gzella 2004: pp. 39–41), especially if one supposes that their Aramaic originates in Achaemenid administration as well. Consequently, it seems unnecessary to assume an incipient stage of Iranian-Aramaic “alloglottography” here: Achaemenid Aramaic had spread through the Iranian Plateau and even reached the Indus region, where it supplemented local idioms and enjoyed a lasting prestige. The Khalili documents now provide evidence for a language situation in the eastern provinces that could formerly only be inferred from indirect reflexes in later periods.

The core part of the corpus consists of a group of eight letters sent to Bagavant, a provincial governor (*phṭ*’ /pāḥātā/; indeterminate form: *phḥ* /pāḥā/) residing in Khulmi (*ḥlmy*; A2:8), about 80 km east of Bactra, during the reign of Artaxerxes III. They were authored by a certain Akhvamazda, who, judging from the epistolary style, seems to have been Bagavant’s superior and thus possibly the satrap of Bactria at that time. Nonetheless, like Aršama in his correspondence and Parnakka in the sources from the heartland (cf. Chapter 62 Persia), he is never referred to with that title (which would be *ḥštrpn* in the Xanthos stele, KAI 319:4, or *ḥšdrpn* /’aḥašdarpan/ in Biblical Aramaic) but only with the honorific “my lord” (*mr’y* /māre’ī/). The original editors suppose that the letters are draft versions that had been kept in Akhvamazda’s archive in Bactra (Naveh and Shaked 2012: pp. 16–18). This hypothesis explains why several of them were composed as palimpsests on top of an earlier layer of this expensive writing material and contain uncorrected mistakes. It does not necessarily apply to the lists, one of which (C2) was sealed and unopened when acquired.

The original provenance of the other documents remains unknown for the time being: of the remaining 10 letters and epistolary fragments (B1–10), those which are sufficiently preserved seem to contain orders about the delivery of goods relating to a lower stratum of administration (B2; B3; B4; B6) and about the military (B1; B5); except for one seemingly earlier fragment (B10), similarities in the writing place them close in time to the dated Akhvamazda letters. Both possible instances of a sub-standard spelling of the causative stem prefix with ’ instead of *h* occur in this group (B1:3; 5:9). Ten lists recording allocations and two receipts (C1–10) and 18 wooden tallies (D1–18), presumably serving as tokens for the distribution of commodities, furnish insights into public bookkeeping. Despite this exciting new material,

the picture remains incomplete: Aramaic acted as the language of the upper echelons of administration, but the texts provide little evidence for a comprehensive view on the social and economic situation; hence they have to be supplemented by the Persepolis Fortification and Treasury Archives, which represent the base level of what was apparently the same bureaucratic system (Gzella 2015: pp. 178–184). Contrary to Egypt and Samaria, where numerous legal documents have been found, no direct information is currently available on the workings of private law in Bactria.

Administrative Procedures and Hierarchy

Being focused on a representative of the Great King, a satrapal archive emphasizes the perspective of imperial power, or even personal gain, rather than provincial autonomy. The true interaction of local administration and centralized supervision in Bactria is thus hard to grasp, as is the general structure of the provincial government. Likewise, the administrative prehistory of the region remains obscure, but the satrapal system could easily have integrated institutions preceding Achaemenid rule and their apparatus. The letters sent by Akhvamazda to his subordinate Bagavant (A1–A8; dated between 353 and 348 BCE) do, however, emphasize the control exercised by various layers of management during a relatively short period toward the end of the Achaemenid Empire and at the same time contain insights into the exploitation by high-ranking Persian officials for their personal benefit. A developed postal system made communication in writing reasonably fast and effective.

The presence of an epistolary fragment that exhibits more archaic letter forms and has been dated to the first half of the fifth century BCE on grounds of paleography (B10; Naveh and Shaked 2012: p. 171) might reveal some continuity in scribal culture. If the date is correct, it indicates that basic administrative structures and institutions had been developed at a much earlier stage of Achaemenid rule, even if the surviving remains of this text do not contain much meaningful information (the alleged reference to a *ganzabara* “treasurer” in l. 2 is uncertain). Although the lion’s share of the letters is not more than a snapshot, the letters mirror tendencies that can also be observed in the undated correspondence of Aršama, the satrap of Egypt, dating from the late fifth century BCE according to the contents and thus some 60 years older.

Both sub-corpora share not only the same general pattern (form of address, structure, terminology, layout, way of binding and sealing with the name of the addressee and the subject on the outside, etc.) and a similarly directive tone of voice but also a common style of governance: satraps could employ provincial administrators under their sway for amassing substantial landed property and managing their own estates (*bytn*, “houses”) abroad. True, giv-

ing directions for fortifying cities (A4; A5) evidently was part of a satrap's core business, especially in a border region, but the official nature of repeatedly issuing repairs for old buildings that belong to Akhvamazda and having grain delivered to his granary (A6) is less easy to fathom, just like Aršama's instructions for protecting his property in Egypt during a revolt (Driver 7, referring to an established "best practice" in ll. 7–8) or for executing sculptures (*ptkrn*) for him (Driver 9; cf. *ptkrw* in C7:4, but the context there is unclear). According to one possible interpretation of another written order (A2), Bagavant and troops under his command may have been employed for maintenance works on a "house," possibly a desert caravanserai, of Akhvamazda's or for the delivery of vinegar (Naveh and Shaked 2012: p. 81; the crucial Aramaic term, *hl'*, is ambiguous in consonantal writing and can mean "sand," /ḥāl/, or "vinegar," /ḥall/). The latter case reminds us of Aršama's order, to be issued via his district-officer to a hesitant commander, that military units should protect his estate in Egypt (Driver 4). Some letters (A3; A7) are too fragmentary for drawing any conclusions on the context, so the number of suitable examples remains limited.

Procedural accuracy emerges from the amount of earlier communications quoted in the surviving messages, especially in the case of complaints (e.g. A1). Reluctance to execute orders on the part of subordinates had to be motivated in detail (as in A4). One does not know whether the lack of enthusiasm that lower-level functionaries exhibited according to Driver 4 and Khalili A4 had something to do with instructions that presuppose the use of public means for private ends, or whether there was any general awareness of a distinction between both different spheres at all, but it should not be excluded, even if one has to reckon with the possibility that instances like these concern property of which high functionaries could dispose *ex officio*.

A more detailed comparison between the letters sent by Aršama during his stay in Babylon or Susa and those dispatched, or to be dispatched, by Akhvamazda can highlight, besides practically identical terminology for official functions and comparable forms of control, similar epistolary and procedural conventions at least for Egypt and Bactria. The satrap had authority over a local "governor" (*pḥh*; cf. Hoftijzer and Jongeling 1995: p. 904; Gzella [ed.] 2016: p. 598) like Bagavant, who apparently acted as a superior to various "district-officers" (termed *pqyd* /paqīd/, cf. Driver 1965: pp. 15–17 and Hoftijzer and Jongeling 1995: p. 933, but the exact meaning is unclear and may also include non-governmental executive agents of different types), so the territory seems to have consisted of, or at least included, local modules (Briant 2002p. 749).

Yet such a comparison could also point to some variation in the administrative hierarchy. First, the term "governor" is unattested in the Aršama letters, which do, however, refer to district-officers of varying standing.

Other bureaucratic functions known from Egypt, conversely, such as “the accountants” (*hmrkry*;³ Driver 1965: p. 17) and maybe also “comptroller” (*knzsrm* or *kndsrm*, if indeed a title and not a proper name, but see Hoftijzer and Jongeling 1995: p. 519), be they part of the public or the private sphere, do not occur in the Bactrian texts. In addition, the colophons of the 13 texts of the Aršama correspondence, where extant, seem to distinguish fairly consistently between a scribe or clerk (*spr* /*sāper*/) on the one hand and another person who “is cognizant of this order” (*yd’ t’ m’ znh*), i.e. who is entrusted with the execution of the respective command, on the other (Driver 4:4; 6:6; 7:10; 8:6; 9:3; 10:5; Driver 1965: pp. 17–19). In the Khalili letters, by contrast, both functions seem to be performed by the same man, as the wording “N.N. the scribe is cognizant of this order” (*spr’ yd’ t’ m’ znh*) indicates (A1:12; A3:3–4; A4:6; A5:3; A6:11; A7:2). Only one letter (A2:7) mentions, besides the scribe, a “master of the order” (*b’l t’ m*), clearly the title of a high-ranking government executive (Stolper 1989: pp. 299–303; cf. Naveh and Shaked 2012: pp. 23–24) and perhaps referring to the prefect of the chancery, and has the respective name added above the line. This latter title is also attested in another letter by Aršama from Egypt (TADAE A6.2:23) authorizing a boat repair, where it refers to a scribe, and occurs in the context of the administration in Samaria in Ezr 4:8–9.17.

Consequently, the Akhvamazda letters may reflect an administrative system that had at least one less bureaucratic intermediary than the one underlying the Aršama correspondence due to a merger of the originally distinct functions of the “scribe” and “the one cognizant of this order” in practice. Moreover, they do not contain references to similar functions known from other parts of the empire, especially from Egypt. Yet it cannot be said with certainty whether this results from a procedural reform, a local peculiarity, the perspective of a higher administrative layer, or simply the limited amount of the surviving evidence. As “the one cognizant of this order” in the administration of late fifth-century Egypt seems to have been appointed specifically for each individual case, combining his function with a more permanent office like the one of a scribe would at any rate have reduced bureaucratic overhead.

Such apparently minor differences notwithstanding, the Akhvamazda correspondence corroborates the basic workings of the administrative hierarchy that emerge from the Aršama archive. The subordinates’ functioning was clearly monitored and subject to higher appeal; they were not only supposed to report to the satrap in person, as the reference to Bagavant’s visit to Akhvamazda indicates (A2:1), but could also be the subjects of complaints lodged by other local officials, including district-officers, to a higher authority (A1 and A6; cf. Driver 11 and 12). Conversely, the satraps themselves had to

“go to the Great King” once in a while (said of Aršama in TADAE A4.5:2–3 and TADAE A4.7:4–5, both referring to an event in the same fourteenth year of Darius, i.e. 411 BCE). This system of control was apparently reproduced along the chain of hierarchy, and the procedure was duly recorded: the letter-orders thereby provide information on the bureaucratic underpinnings of the internal intelligence service that is often supposed to permeate the Achaemenid Empire by means of the famous “eyes (or ears) of the King” (cf. Briant 2002: pp. 343–344).

Being constantly watched, subordinates were encouraged to “do good” (*tb ʿbd*, cf. A6:5) or “to be active” (*nšb*, Driver 7:4–5; 11:3; 13:1; Gzella [ed.] 2016: p. 493), to “please” their superiors with their efforts (the verbal root *hḏī* seems to serve almost as a technical term, see Driver 11:4; 13:2 and cf. perhaps the marginal note *hḏh ʾ[nh* “I am glad/content”(?) in Khalili B3:7), and thus to identify themselves with the imperial cause and its monarchic values. At the same time, they could be taken to account for their actions and even had to pay for losses resulting from their inability to execute orders (A6:10; cf. Briant 2002: pp. 595–596). Akhvamazda’s message in which he strongly urged Bagavant to refrain from exploiting and detaining a group of camel-keepers at the service of another official, who repeatedly complained to Akhvamazda, may serve as a case in point for such an appeal (A1). The motivation is pragmatic: the camel-keepers have to do their work and guard the “camels of the king” (A1:3; 11; on this term, see Briant 2002: pp. 463–471), hence they should be left in peace. This resembles a note of one of Aršama’s subordinates to an officer in Egypt, commanding him not to abuse and exploit the sender’s domestic staff (Driver 12). Achaemenid functionaries thus acted as patrons of their servants; they regularly appealed to a higher authority in order to protect them from their peers’ infringements, or what they conceived as such, thereby perhaps checking the proliferation of greed culture through official ranks.

Other individuals and functions occur but infrequently in the letters: a person called Spaita and perhaps “the judges,” or “magistrates” (*dyny*?, cf. TADAE A4.5:9 and Briant 2002: pp. 510–511), seem to have acted as intermediaries between Bagavant, who had been commissioned to have the town of Nikhšapaya fortified, and the “troop” (*hyl*’ /*ḥaylā*/) that was supposed to execute the work (A4). In Official Aramaic, the word *hyl*’ has clear military connotations when referring to people (see the passages in Hoftijzer and Jongeling 1995: pp. 369–370; Gzella [ed.] 2016: pp. 273–275); however, it may denote a broader group of nominally free men (in contradistinction to dependent laborers) who could perform military duties if necessary but who were also subject to civil forms of statute labor. Ahuradata appears as Bagavant’s *prtrk* “foreman” (A1:8). Once, Vakhšuvahišta and Azdayapa are addressed together with Bagavant relating to the construction of a wall in an unnamed

place (A5; the expression *ʾgrʾ zk* “that wall” with a demonstrative pronoun presupposes an earlier communication, which could, but need not, be A4), yet their formal role remains dubious: *ʾzgn* “messenger,” referring to Vakhšuvahišta, need not be a technical term, and the reading of *prtrk* after Azdayapa is not entirely certain (A5:4). As the Persian administration could credit local leaders, such as tribal chieftains, *ad personam* with varying degrees of formal authority, not every person important enough to be named in these documents necessarily occupied a firm place in the institutional hierarchy.

The lists contain some more designations of functions presumably pertaining to lower administrative and domestic ranks (Naveh and Shaked 2012: pp. 27–29), many of which defy a precise definition, since their mostly Iranian etymology does not have to match their exact meaning: *ʾpdyt* “supervisor”, *ywbr* “barley-supplier” (cf. *ywdn* “barley-house” in TADAE A4.5:5), *srwšy* “penal agent” (cf. *srwšyt* “the punishment” in Driver 3:6 and *šršy* “id.” in Ezr 7:26, where /s/ was apparently misunderstood as /š/ and thus spelled with {š}; Gzella [ed.] 2016: pp. 537–538), *srkr* “superintendent” or perhaps rather “administrator,” “treasurer” (see Hoftijzer and Jongeling 1995: p. 803 for bibliographical references on *srk* in Aramaic documents from Persepolis; cf. Gzella [ed.] 2016: p. 538), and *ptpkn* “distributor of rations” (cf. Stolper 1985: pp. 55–59 on some Babylonian texts). Furthermore, the texts feature several different terms for servants: besides generic *ʾlymn* (male), *ʾmhn* (female), and *hnskrt* (perhaps “apprentices”, Naveh and Shaked 2012: p. 71), *ʾngšn*, *hštrkn*, and *rytkn* could supposedly denote more specialized functions (Naveh and Shaked 2012: p. 209), as did *gmln* “camel-keepers” (but *štrpnn* in A1:2), *wzn* “geese herders,” and *dmydtknn*, perhaps “livestock attendants.” The latter three occupations were presumably outsourced to contracted herders (cf. Henkelman 2011 for Persepolis).

Economy and Taxation

Owing to the functional distribution of official languages in the Achaemenid Empire, the lower strata of administration in the heartland, especially finances and bookkeeping, employed Elamite and made use of multilingual scribes (Tavernier 2008). Remnants of Elamite account texts like the ones used in Persepolis have been discovered at Kandahar and suggest that a similar system was operative at least in Afghanistan, too, so the Aramaic material allows but occasional glimpses into the workings of the economy in the province of Bactria.

Several of the Khalili letters have been drafted by administrators of roughly equal rank, as appears from the use of the conventional salutation formula “I hereby send you much peace and well-being” (*šlm wšrrt šgy*)

hwsrt), which is omitted when addressing one's subordinate but is also attested in Aršama's letters to a certain Artahont (Driver 1, 2, 3, and 5). No titles of offices are given in these texts, but one may suppose that some acted as order-letters dispatched by deputy-directors authorizing the delivery of food rations (B2) and donkeys (B4; possibly also B6), comparable to a similar instruction by Aršama (Driver 6). Such orders may have been translated into Elamite when further processed by clerks of a lower rank (cf. Chapter 62 Persia).

Two references to the military in the same group (B1; B5) remain enigmatic because of the broken context and, unfortunately, do not further clarify the debated internal organization of the army in the Achaemenid Empire. Yet Akhvamazda's authorization for a temporary leave granted to a troop (*hyl* /*hayl*/) engaged in construction work, so that they can harvest their crop under the threat of a locust plague (A4), may suggest that at least part of the common military personnel has been conscripted from local farmers (Briant 2009: p. 148 with n. 34, but see also the remark on *hyl* above). This matches references to locally organized conscription in ancient accounts of Bessos' revolt (Briant 2002: pp. 749–750).

The lists of supplies include allocations for traveling functionaries (C1; similarly perhaps C5), which would have to be issued by the satrap (Briant 2002: pp. 364–368), the disbursement of small cattle (C2; Aramaic *qn* can refer to small cattle in general or sheep in particular), and rations distributed to servants and functionaries (C3; C4); several small fragments remain elusive. As they have been written in Aramaic, they may relate to long-term bookkeeping at a higher bureaucratic level or were intended for more than ephemeral use; it could thus well be significant that one document (C4) lists allocations for three successive months. They point to a diverse production in livestock and foodstuffs and indicate that the quality of the allocations varied according to the rank of the recipient (Naveh and Shaked 2012: p. 33).

The terminology (*ptp* “ration”; once also *pšbr* “travel provision”) has parallels elsewhere in Achaemenid administration (Briant 2009: p. 149), but some of the more specialized vocabulary is new. According to C4, different officials were involved in a three-step distribution that consisted of “measuring” (*nmyt*, see Naveh and Shaked 2012: p. 207), “weighing out” (*nsp*, if indeed related to the *nsp*-measure attested in Hebrew inscriptions, on which see Hoftijzer and Jongeling 1995: p. 754; Naveh and Shaked 2012: p. 26 and 207 suggest the meaning “to distribute”), and “paying out, disbursing” (*gbī*, which means “to levy taxes” elsewhere in Aramaic; Naveh and Shaked 2012: p. 208). The system of measures appears to correspond to evidence from both Elephantine in Egypt and Persepolis (Naveh and Shaked 2012: p. 37); it is thus indicative of at least some standardization in bookkeeping.

Occasional references to taxation in the Khalili documents, too, reproduce established terminology, as two technical terms also occur elsewhere in the Achaemenid Aramaic material: *mndh* seems to refer to taxes on income from landed property and commercial transactions for the royal house, hence “revenues of the King” (*mndt mlk*) in A8:2 (cf. Driver 10:3.4; 11.3; TADAE B3.6; C3.5; C3.7; Ezr 4:13.20; 6:8; 7:24; see also Briant 2002: pp. 385, 441; Klinkott 2007: pp. 277–278), but the context is broken; *hlk* more specifically denotes a land tax, even though this meaning does not clearly emerge from its attestation in A1:2.14 (but cf. Driver 8:5; Ezr 4:13.20; 7:24; and a papyrus fragment from Wadi Daliyeh, WDSP 32 fr. 2:2 in Dušek 2007, see also Gzella 2012: p. 610, 2016: pp. 232–233), where it designates a seemingly unlawful extraction from camel-keepers by Bagavant. A third term that appears in the same letter, *nhmrnyt*’ (A1:9.11), was previously unknown and, judging from the context, may refer to a disproportionate payment, perhaps in addition to the usual taxes (see Naveh and Shaked 2012: pp. 30 and 74). Even if it was in principle lawful, the satrap could exempt individuals from paying taxes (Klinkott 2007: p. 267).

In addition, 18 wooden sticks inscribed with ink (D1–18), all of which except for one (D18, undated) bear the third regnal year of Darius, presumably Darius III (336–330 BCE), appear to have served as tokens recording the debt or receipt of unnamed goods. Only the name of the receiver and the supplier, each of whom may have kept an identical half (though no matching parts survive in the collection), are given in the stereotypical formula “With PN1 from PN2” (*‘m PN1 mn PN2*); two texts contain further, though enigmatic, information (D1; D2). Notches of varying shape incised on the edge may have specified the quantity of the commodity involved and/or served as a means for identifying the two halves. As 15 different names of receivers but only three different suppliers appear on these sticks, it is tempting to assume that they were used in order to register food rations stored centrally and distributed by treasury clerks to the superiors of dependent workers or military personnel (Naveh and Shaked 2012: pp. 31–33, 231), a practice much better attested for Persepolis (see Chapter 62 Persia).

The hypothesis that wooden tallies were employed for the distribution of standardized amounts of goods in an institutional context derives further support from the fact that otherwise texts on parchment recorded transactions between individuals. The relevant example in the Akhvamazda correspondence mentions certain “drugs” or “medications” (*smyn*) which Bagavant received from his wife (A9) and thus also points to the legal capacities of women who belonged to the ruling elite, although it is unclear how this document made its way into the satrapal archive. Another leather fragment confirms that Bagavant could act as guarantor or debtor, depending on the translation of the term *’hry* /’aḥarāy/ “responsible” (A10).

Epilogue: The Hellenistic Period

The turbulent last years of the Achaemenid Empire seem to have made little impact on the Khalili documents. Naveh's and Shaked's suggestion (2012: p. 19) that a certain *bys* in C1 refers to Bessos, a satrap who had proclaimed himself king, cannot be further substantiated at the moment. Yet one of the lists recording allocations is dated to the seventh year of Alexander the King (C4) and thereby shows that the local chancery and its infrastructure outlived the political entity that supported it. No change in administrative language, chancery staff, or method of bookkeeping appears when compared with the earlier documents. This resembles the situation in Persepolis (Briant 2002: pp. 733–737). Moreover, Iranian names continued to be used in Hellenistic Bactria even when Greek eventually served as the language of administration and public display. While the onomasticon alone does not prove linguistic continuity, it seems feasible to assume that Achaemenid heritage was part of a more varied cultural matrix in the decades following Alexander's conquest than Greek identity-forming suggests (Mairs 2014: pp. 27–56).

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SECTION VI.C

ECONOMY

CHAPTER 67

Taxes and Tributes

Johannes Hackl and Kai Ruffing

The main groups of sources pertaining to taxes and tributes are texts of classical authors on the one side and cuneiform sources on the other, the latter to a significant part originating from Babylonia. Both groups open entirely divergent perspectives on the topic. In the former case we receive reports, embedded into narrative contexts, which pertain to the whole empire, even though there is a considerable information asymmetry between west and east. In the latter case we get insights into an administrative microcosm, which allows us to only faintly recognize the empire. These circumstances make it difficult to give a coherent idea of the tax and tribute system, but rather convey a picture whose internal inconsistency cannot be completely dismissed.

Taxes and Tributes According to the Classical Sources

The Achaemenid Empire like other premodern empires falls under the historiographic category of a “tributary empire.” This term is commonly used for empires exacting tributes resulting at least from agricultural surplus. In this way such empires are distinguished from the modern empires, where commercial exploitation of dependent people and lands was more important than the extraction of a “tribute” (Bang 2008: p. 10).

Without any doubt tributes, taxes, and other imposts such as customs duties were of great significance in running the empire. Unfortunately the evidence for

reconstructing this central aspect of the empire's structure is at least fragmentary, and highly problematical as far as Greek historiography is concerned. Also the enchoric sources, i.e. the royal inscriptions, the Elamic tablets from Persepolis, Aramaic documents from Egypt, create their own problems of interpretation (see the overview in Kuhrt 2007: pp. 669–729; see further Tuplin 1987: pp. 137–158; Briant and Herrenschmidt 1989; Wiesehöfer 1993: pp. 98–102; Briant 2002: pp. 67–70, 388–471, 800–813; Klinkott 2007; Jursa 2011; King 2019). The tributes were not only economically significant; for the Achaemenid kings, tributes were of huge ideological importance as well. This becomes clear when looking at the royal inscriptions, particularly with regard to those of Darius I. According to some inscriptions, containing the so-called *dahyāva*-lists, the king claims that the *dahyāva* named in the lists brought tributes to him (DB § 7; DNa § 3; DPe § 2; DSe § 3; see also XPh § 3). The particular ideological importance of receiving tributes from foreign lands and foreign people is reflected also in the tribute friezes of the staircases of the Apadana in Persepolis, where delegations of the whole empire are displayed. Thus the tribute is a key element of royal ideology and self-representation.

The Old Persian word for tribute used by Darius I and Xerxes is *bāji*-. The term has various meanings and can be translated as “tribute,” “interest,” “impost,” and “tax” (Brandenstein and Mayrhofer 1964: 110 s.v.; Hinz 1973: p. 129, s.v. *bāžim*). In the Greek literary sources one finds different designations for the tributes levied by the Achaemenid kings. According to Herodotus, in the time of Cyrus II and Cambyses II the people of the empire brought gifts (*dōra*) to the king, whereas Darius is said to have introduced a new system of taxation with people organized in territorial districts and now paying a tribute, which in Greek is called *phoros* (Hdt. 3.89.3). Platon (Leg. 695c) and others, however, used the Greek term *dasmos* for the tributes paid in the Persian Empire, which may fit better than the younger term *phoros* (Wiesehöfer 2007: p. 33). Thus a clear and definite terminology can be found in neither the Persian royal inscriptions nor the Greek literature. The reasons for this imprecise use of terms for tribute in both groups of sources are different. As already mentioned, the royal inscriptions on the one hand are mainly to be seen in an ideological context, since the tributes were a material expression of Persian domination as well as a claim of Achaemenid kings for universal kingship (Tuplin 1987: pp. 137–138; Wiesehöfer 2007: pp. 34–40). Consequently, like in other Near Eastern contexts, gifts in the real sense of the word were supposedly styled in the royal self-representation as tributes (e.g. Bagg 2011: pp. 130–134; Briant 2002: pp. 68–69). Herodotus, on the other hand, uses a terminology for Persian tributes (*dōron*, *phoros*) that is different from that of other Greek authors using the word *dasmos*. Presumably this can be explained with the concepts he uses to describe and characterize the Persian kings Cyrus II and Darius I. Each of them is styled in a different way. According to

Herodotus, Cyrus exclusively receiving gifts (*dōra*) voluntarily given by the people of the empire was called father by the Persians. Darius then imposing a tribute (*phoros*) and forcing his subjects to pay was called a huckster. The designations chosen by the Halicarnassian for the different kinds of tribute as well as for the kings are to be understood as a parable, which serves to compare Athens and Persia. This comparison can be interpreted as passing criticism on Athens and the Athenians in the age between the end of the Persian wars and the outbreaking Peloponnesian war (Ruffing 2011: pp. 93–94). This becomes also evident when looking at tributes in the age of Cyrus and Cambyses, which in contrast to what Herodotus said were exacted by the Teispid kings (Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1989; Briant 2002: pp. 67–68).

Furthermore, there are a lot of other reasons why the Herodotean discussion of tributes (Hdt. 3.89–94) should not be taken at face value for the structural history of the Persian Empire. To go into further detail is beyond the scope of this chapter, thus a few remarks may suffice. Firstly, the terminology for the satrapies is at least a little confused, since Herodotus calls the tax districts *nomoi*, not satrapies. Secondly, these *nomoi* are listed according to the principles of ancient Greek and Babylonian geography and not according to the principles used by Achaemenid kings in the *dahyāva*-lists (Kuhrt 2002: pp. 19–22; Ruffing 2009: pp. 325–328). Thirdly, the tributes are calculated in bullion. Fourthly, there is a progression in the amount of tributes from the west to the east and south, which fits well with more general Herodotean concepts of the distribution of wealth in the inhabited world. Fifthly, the list of *nomoi* coincides neither with the lists of peoples in the Persian army given by the same author nor with the *dahyāva*-lists of the royal inscriptions (Jacobs 2003; Ruffing 2009: pp. 330–332, 2011: pp. 86–93, but see Tuplin 2011: pp. 53–55).

Thus, on the one hand we can conclude that the sources mentioned so far are clear indications for the existence of tributes in the Achaemenid Empire. On the other hand, however, they do not provide us with clear insights into the details of levying tributes or of the nature and types of imposts. Therefore we have to rely on other evidence, mainly Greek sources from the period of transition from the Achaemenid to the Macedonian reign in the Persian Empire. In particular there are two highly important passages in the second book of the Ps-Aristotelian work *On Economy*. The date of this work is notoriously contended in modern research, but it can be set approximately in the last quarter of the fourth century BCE (Zoepffel 2006: pp. 214–217, 529–530 against Aperghis 2004: pp. 117–135). Thus the evidence resulting from this source can be used for the reconstruction of structures in the Persian Empire, since the treatise reflects the Greek interest in the empire (Briant 2002: pp. 389–390). What is written here, then, is based on the – supposedly late – Achaemenid model (Kuhrt 2007: p. 673). The first passage deals with

the “royal economy” (Arist. Oec. 2,1,3). Amongst other things it is said that one of the economic duties of the king is to decide how much of the taxes in kind (Greek: *tagē*) was to be transferred to the king himself and how much remained at the disposal of the satraps (Zoepffel 2006: pp. 544–547). The following paragraph of this chapter of the Ps.-Aristotelian treatise on the economy focuses upon the so-called “satrapal-economy” (Arist. Oec. 2.1.4), giving an overview of different kinds of taxes and other imposts. Six categories of satrapal incomes are listed here. Firstly, the income resulting from the earth is mentioned, styled by the unknown author as the most important sort of income. Moreover, the author introduces two different kinds of taxes levied on agricultural production – one in Greek is called *ekphorion*, while the other is named *dekatē*. Whereas for the latter, the tithe, it is rather clear what is meant, the former is discussed in modern research (Descat 1989: p. 82; Aperghis 2004: pp. 139–142; Klinkott 2005: p. 157; Zoepffel 2006: pp. 550–551), but is clearly to be understood as a satrapal income resulting from agriculture. Furthermore, income deriving from peculiarities of each region are mentioned as well as customs duties, taxes on trades and crafts, on herds, and a poll tax. Nearly every detail of the Ps.-Aristotelian account is debated by modern scholars (Aperghis 2004: pp. 123–127; Zoepffel 2006: pp. 551–556), but some information provided by the author is confirmed by other sources (Briant 2002: pp. 399–401). Very important in this context is a long Aramaic customs account from Achaemenid Egypt illustrating the levy of duties in this region on behalf of the Persian administration (Kuhrt 2007: chap. 14, no. 10). In the Persis itself evidently a tithe on agricultural products was collected; this can be demonstrated analyzing the Elamite tablets pertaining to the central administration in Persepolis itself (Briant 2002: pp. 439–441). In addition to these taxes and imposts the population was obliged to perform compulsory services for the state, e.g. the work on the canals and other things. The *corvée* is best attested in Babylonia (Kuhrt 2007: chap. 14, no. 20–23), but existed in other parts of the empire too (Briant 2002: pp. 401–402; Jursa 2011: p. 442; Tuplin 2011: pp. 57–58). According to Herodotus (1.192.1), there was a further obligation on the subjects of the Persian Empire: providing food-stuffs for the king as well as for his entourage and his army (Briant 2002: pp. 402–403; Tuplin 2011: pp. 56–57).

But a lot of problems remain, first and foremost that the evidence of Babylonian source material, at least for the period of Darius I, gives an image of Achaemenid taxation, which is really different from the one of the Greek literary texts (Jursa 2011: p. 445; see below). The evidence for the west of the empire available apart from the Herodotean accounts is puzzling and highly problematic in itself. There is an inscription definitely written in the second century CE containing a text pretending to be a letter of Darius I regarding financial matters (ML 12). The authenticity of this piece, in which Darius

reprehends a royal slave for having levied taxes on land belonging to Apollo, is challenged in modern research (Briant 2003; Tuplin 2009) since the letter was used as an example by interested persons dealing with the Roman imperial administration in order to get an exemption from taxes. Whilst it is interesting to see that people negotiating with imperial officials in the Roman Empire used “Achaemenid” regulations as an argument, it is necessary to be at least highly skeptical regarding the genuineness of this text.

Another problematical issue is the transfer of tax payments from the periphery to the center, and the relationship between taxes paid in kind and those paid in cash or bullion. Herodotus in his narration of *phoroi* paid to the Great King maintained that there were huge amounts of silver and gold transferred to the king’s court. According to Herodotus, precious metals were melted and poured into earthen jars; when the metal finally turned solid, the jars were smashed and the remaining blocks of metal were stored away. In case of pressing needs the king cut the pieces of bullion he needed (Hdt. 3.96.2). The story tells us much about the Herodotean concepts in general and about those of the wealth of Persian kings in particular (Bichler 2007) but has supposedly little to do with realities within the Persian Empire. This becomes especially clear when looking at the place where in the Herodotean imagination Darius accumulated his riches. Only Susa is mentioned in this regard (Hdt. 5.49.7). The motive is expanded in a story told by the historiographer Polykleitos of Larissa in the time of Alexander III, according to whom every Persian king had his own treasury at Susa containing lists of all taxes collected by him. Furthermore, he maintains that the taxes on the coast were paid in cash and those levied in the inner land in kind (FGrH 128 F 3). This as well seems to be more a tale of Greek imagination than a structural reality of the Persian Empire (Briant 2002: pp. 407–408). In the book Nehemiah 5, 4–6, on the contrary, it is said that the taxes on arable(?) land and vineyards had to be paid in silver. The texts from Persepolis demonstrate that in the Fars there were taxes to be paid in silver (PT 85 = Kuhrt 2007: chap. 14 No. 32). Furthermore, they prove the existence of transfers of bullion to the center of the empire, that is from Babylonia to Persepolis, for example; another document mentions a transfer from Susa to a place called Matezzish, which was very close to Persepolis (PF 1357 and 1342 = Kuhrt 2007: chap. 14 no. 34).

But were the taxes and other imposts really equivalent to the tributes (Tuplin 2011: p. 54)? What has been said up to this point makes it hard to believe that it was possible for the satraps to pay a fixed amount of tribute to the central administration or the king based on the income of the taxes, e.g. levied on the ground. If taxes on arable ground at least in parts of the empire were collected on the basis of a tithe, the imperial administration in one way or another had to convert them in precious metal (Briant 2002: pp. 452–454; Klinkott 2005: pp. 165–167). If this is true, taxes and other imposts are parts of the tribute

(Klinkott 2005: pp. 169–170). This might function for the monetized parts of the empire but is highly problematical for the other regions not disposing of a monetized economy. Furthermore, under the conditions of premodern agriculture, the amount of produce could vary considerably. How, then, could a satrap deal with these variations in harvests? A possible solution could be found in the person of the satrap. In analogy to other tributary empires one could be inclined to suppose that he might be responsible for the tribute personally: he had to compensate for shortcomings and could retain that which was gathered beyond the tribute fixed by the king.

Supposedly, at least as far as the Babylonian evidence is concerned, the Achaemenids used the systems of tributes and other imposts which they found after the incorporation of the area into their empire. Regarding that, seemingly one has to speak of regional tax systems within the Achaemenid Empire. The levy of tributes, taxes, and other imposts was the responsibility of the satraps, who had to transfer at least a part of this income as tribute to the center of the empire.

Kai Ruffing

Taxation and Service Obligations Under the Persians According to Babylonian Cuneiform Texts

For a long time the Herodotean narrative on Darius I's tax reform (Hdt. 3.89-97) depicted above has been regarded as the most important source of information on the Achaemenid Empire's tribute and taxation system (see also Jacobs 1994: pp. 9–29). The reason for this lies in the unique composition of Herodotus' account. Unlike the majority of the Greek authors, he is not so much driven by a desire to discredit the Persians and the introduction of monetary taxes but rather strives to collect as much information as possible in order to address the political aspect of this royal policy. On the basis of Herodotus' long discussion, it is widely accepted that Darius I's reform brought about a shift from irregular tribute (paid in kind) to regular money taxes levied from the king's subject people, collected centrally, and hoarded. In the case of the satrapy of Babylonia (and the rest of Assyria), for example, this tax burden, according to Herodotus, amounted to 1000 talents of silver as well as 500 boy eunuchs.

The classical authors, however, are not the only source on the empire's tribute and taxation system. In fact, the only really substantial body of primary evidence on Achaemenid taxation is furnished by Babylonian cuneiform texts. From a historiographical point of view, the availability of both textual corpora not only presents a windfall for ancient historians but also raises the question of whether cuneiform and classical sources can be reconciled on this matter.

Before exploring this question any further, a few words on the nature of the pertinent cuneiform sources are in order. For decades, Assyriological research on taxation and service obligations owed to the crown was largely based on the Murašû archive from the late fifth century BCE (Stolper 1985). The reason for this lies in the fact that this archive not only is one of the richest sources of information on these matters but also has been known to academic circles for a long time. Through recent research, however, it is by now well established that the Murašû archive reflects the particular circumstances of the region around Nippur in central Babylonia, at that time underdeveloped and isolated. Hence, it cannot be used for generalizing statements on either the taxation system or the Babylonian economy as a whole. Studies of newly available material, from both private and temple archives, have put this bias reflected by the Murašû archive into perspective and brought to light a more complex system that relies on different forms of taxation, in the broad sense of the word (including service obligations). Secondly, it needs to be stressed that the various elements of the taxation system, or at least its roots, were already in place in the preceding Neo-Babylonian period, if not earlier (i.e. the Neo-Assyrian period). It is thus necessary to evaluate the realm of taxation and service obligations during the Achaemenid period with the earlier documentation in mind.

Until the end of the reign of Darius I, direct taxation of (agrarian) income as well as the extraction of labor and military service are attested in three forms, each of which is tied to a certain category of social agent (Jursa 2011a: pp. 433–443; Jursa 2011b: pp. 169–173). These categories include the following agents, not necessarily in order of importance. But note that of all the socioeconomic agents documented by our sources, the temples owned the largest estates.

- 1) Temples.
- 2) “Military colonists.”
- 3) Private urban households.

These three categories of direct taxation are supplemented by a fourth category: the king’s estates. What limited and mostly indirect evidence we have for royal domain land indicates that they, too, were an important source of income for the crown. It is clear, however, that by comparison with private or temple land, such estates played a minor role with respect to the overall agricultural output.

In the realm of the temples, the sources on taxes and tributes attest to the following assessments that were imposed on the temple households by the crown. In short, we see direct taxation of agrarian income and the extraction of labor and military service as well as the obligation to provide for the itinerant court and the royal army. Taxes levied on the income of temple lands are

first mentioned at the beginning of the Chaldean period, during the reign of Nabopolassar. Shortly after the Persian conquest of Babylonia, there is evidence indicating that this tax amounted to 3.33% of the temple's income. The collection of direct taxes of this kind was supervised by an official entitled "governor of Esangila" (*bēl pīhāt Esangila*). The title clearly reflects the official's affiliation to the main sanctuary Esangila in Babylon and is thus indicative of the temple's role as a central collection point, at least from an administrative point of view. Among the different designations for this kind of tax, we find the phrase "(payment for) the life of the god Bēl" (*balātu ana Bēl*), which, incidentally, establishes a strong link to the Esangila temple. The preponderance of payments in kind notwithstanding, at least in the Achaemenid period, the frequent use of silver money for tax payments falls in line with the general trend of an increasing monetization of economic exchange observed in the first millennium BCE (Jursa 2010: pp. 469–474). After the first decade of Darius I's reign, this tax is no longer attested. However, it is likely that the absence of occurrences is not the result of fundamental changes in the taxation system but arises simply from the fact that the number of cuneiform sources falls back sharply after the later regnal years of Darius I. Also note that in the later Murašû archive, that is, in a different economic setting, mention is made of a tax designated as *balātu ana Bēl*.

In addition to direct taxes, the crown was entitled to requisitions of workers for royal building projects. The recruiting and organization of these work-gangs was delegated to the temples. In principle, the temples themselves furnished these work-gangs by mobilizing temple dependants (in particular, *širku* workers). However, the constant lack of manpower frequently required the temples to draw upon the free members of the temple household (i.e. the priestly families), who then had to meet these service obligations or pay for substitutes. In the same vein, the temples were also held accountable for feeding the king and his entourage when present in Babylonia.

The second category of social agents, the "military colonists," were the principal protagonists of the land-for-service system. The central element of this system were land allotments (e.g. *bīt qaštis* bow properties) granted by the crown or its representatives to numerous individuals or to a group of individuals (organized in *kišru* or *hadru* collectives) in return for a form of military service (Van Driel 2002: pp. 226–273). The benefits of this system to the crown were twofold: since these "military colonists" were often of non-Babylonian extraction, the system was a means of integrating these foreigners into the state. Secondly, the crown could reap direct economic benefit from otherwise unexploited land, as these estates were often situated in agriculturally underdeveloped areas (e.g. the hinterland of Nippur). To be sure, the concept of assigning land to soldier-tenants in return for service was

not an innovation of the Achaemenid period; in fact, its basic organization harks back to the Neo-Babylonian period, which, in turn, was influenced by earlier periods. But the system, as documented in the Achaemenid period, may have been extended in terms of its quantitative scale. As in earlier periods, there was the tendency to dissociate the actual service and the cultivation of the land in that the holders of service land relied on outsiders for its actual exploitation.

In urban contexts, taxes and service obligations were imposed upon private households (i.e. priestly families and other members of the urban elite) on the basis of various predetermined criteria. Among these, the possession of certain types of (alienable) agricultural land or urban real estate and the affiliation to particular social or professional groups were by far the most important. Depending on these criteria, taxation was either levied according to existing land allotment schemes, by which city dwellers had been granted agricultural land in the hinterland of the cities, or according to urban residence patterns. The system of levy was expressed in tax units that specified the organization of how different taxes (and other obligations) incumbent on city dwellers were collected. Key terms include *hanšu* (lit. “fifties”), designating regular field systems divided into five parts (Jursa 2011b: p. 171). The latter, in turn, represented the allotment of individual tax units of 10 men or households (*ešertu* “decury”). Similar tax units are found in urban contexts.

The various obligations incumbent on urban taxpayers had originally been service obligations. Keywords in this respect are *ilku* “(unspecified) service obligation,” *urāšu* “corvée work(er),” as well as *qaštu* “archer,” which eventually was used as a generic term for “soldier.” From the Chaldean period onward, however, members of the urban elite frequently discharged their obligations in money, that is, they hired substitutes who fulfilled their corvée obligations to the temple. These substitutes could be hired by the taxpayers themselves or by their tax units. Alternatively, the silver payments made in compensation for the actual service were collected by the commanders of military/corvée units or by tax farmers who, in turn, hired soldiers/workers locally or passed on the money to higher authorities. Despite the fact that this taxation system involved substantial amounts of silver, its principal purpose was not to collect money taxes but to pay for hirelings used as corvée workers or soldiers.

The basis of this system harks back to the end of the seventh century BCE during which land had been reclaimed by the Chaldeans and organized in *hanšu* field systems which were then assigned to members of the urban elite. After the conquest of Babylonia, the system was adopted by the Persian administration. Fundamental structural changes are not visible in the sources; changes did occur in terms of terminology, however. Under Darius I, for example, bow taxes (*qaštu*) are frequently found in the context of the taxation

of urban households, even though it seems unlikely that urban taxpayers had been granted bow properties (*bīt qaštis*). Rather, we may assume that we are dealing with a terminological shift caused by the integration of the older *hansû* land grants into the *qaštu* system. After the revolts against Xerxes, nearly all private archives – whence most of the pertinent information originates – come to an end. Despite the scarcity of sources, there is, however, sufficient data attesting to the functioning of this system also in the Late Achaemenid period.

Finally, mention should be made of indirect taxation and fees collected by the crown (Jursa 2010: pp. 646–647 with further references). Two principal types of indirect taxes can be isolated: the taxation of real estate and slave sales and that of the transport of goods, including fees for the use of harbors, bridges, and gates. Both types are well attested from the Chaldean period until the end of third century BCE.

After this brief survey of the three main modes by which the crown obliged its subjects to tax payments and service obligations, we now return to the question of how the Herodotean narrative stands up to the picture drawn by the Babylonian sources. In contrast to Herodotus' assessment, money taxes directly paid to the crown do not seem to have been the principal means by which the Persians exploited the resources of Babylonia. Instead, we see a system that was primarily geared toward the mobilization of workers and soldiers. The intricate system of levying substitutes created an important source of income, but at the same time a substantial amount of the silver was spent locally and thus did not find its way into the royal treasury. We may, therefore, conclude that the taxation system as depicted by Herodot and especially the figure of 1000 talents of silver are clearly not in keeping with the information furnished by the primary sources; in essence, Herodotus' account misses the point and does not add any valuable data for the reconstruction of the taxation system under the Persians (Jursa 2011a: p. 444; see also Jacobs 1994: pp. 28–29, 93–96). That said, the Babylonian sources also suggest that the load of service obligations peaked under Darius I, foremost in the form of *corvée* work or military service outside of Babylonia. This, in turn, caused a drainage of cash from the province. Also, the financial burdens of the obligations of hospitality (i.e. the victualing of the itinerant court and/or royal army), as can be reckoned by the accounts of classical authors on other satrapies, and deliveries of various commodities termed *uṣṣiyātu* (an Old Iranian loan word, lit. “by-portion”) to Iran must have represented a considerable commitment of resources. In view of the overall increase of the contributions demanded by the crown, particularly under Darius I, it seems clear that Babylonia was placed under severe economic pressure, which eventually led to social unrest and to the revolts against Xerxes (see also Jursa and Schmidl 2017).

Johannes Hackl

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- Jursa, M. (2005). *Neo-Babylonian Legal and Administrative Documents: Typology, Contents and Archives* (Guides to the Mesopotamian Textual Record 1). Münster: Ugarit-Verlag. Catalogs the sources available for the period under discussion.
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CHAPTER 68

Temple Economy

Cornelia Wunsch

Babylonian temples were the cultic focus and economic centers for their regions. Far from being autonomous, self-sufficient institutions operating an autarkic redistributive system (as was often assumed), the temples of the sixth and early fifth centuries BCE interacted with and depended on the outside economy. The general conditions have been summarized as a “felicitous combination of ecological, demographic, socio-economic and political factors” that brought about a growing economy and increasing productivity in agriculture with frequently market-oriented production where a substantial part of the urban population worked in non-agrarian occupations and where a high degree of labor specialization prevailed in a largely monetized economy (Jursa 2010: pp. 768, 815). The temples in the area along the Euphrates kept in regular contact, traded in staple goods and craft products, and “constituted one fairly well-integrated economic space,” while the hinterland of the temples and their cities “was a zone of intensive, but essentially local, interaction” (Jursa 2010: p. 138f). The main sanctuary was Esagil of Babylon, dedicated to Marduk, the head of the Babylonian pantheon, which played a supreme role and which collected taxes from the other temples, ultimately for the benefit of the king, amounting to 3.5% of the agricultural income in the case of the Eanna of Uruk (Jursa 2010: pp. 68–70).

The Role of the King

The first and foremost servant of the gods and sponsor of the temples was the king himself. All Neo-Babylonian kings legitimized their rule almost exclusively by providing for the temples and they regularly supplied cattle and sheep, commodities, and precious metal. Such contributions (which are difficult to quantify) represented a significant part of the temple's running income. Sporadic endowments in land and labor helped to improve the temples' general viability. At the same time the king exercised control and power by placing his courtiers into the temple administration, such as the "resident" (*qīpu*) and the "treasurer" (*ša mulhi quppi*) as well as minor officials who oversaw the dealings of the temple and their fulfillment of obligations toward the crown. Through the appointment of such officials in increasing numbers over time and through attempts at elevating their hierarchical position with respect to posts that were occupied by members of the urban establishment, the Neo-Babylonian and early Persian kings tried to influence internal temple matters and to prevent the build-up of an independent local power base.

Under the Achaemenid kings, in the beginning the administrative structure of the temples remained largely in place in regard to both offices and personnel. Things changed inasmuch as the rulers did not attempt to fill the whole bandwidth of their predecessors' role. Most of the administrative functions that used to be vested in the king were delegated to the satrap of Babylon and Transpotamia. While the temples' obligations toward the crown and the kings' control remained or increased, the latter's sponsorship for the temples gradually diminished: royal gifts ceased and building projects were discontinued. Instead, temple personnel was conscripted for corvée outside Babylonia. As a result of Xerxes' retaliation against those circles that had supported his contenders for the throne, the leading families in the major Babylonian cities that had staffed the higher echelons of the temples for ages were removed from their offices and stripped of their privileges.

Although the records that survive make us perceive the temples' activities as having mainly to do with nitty-gritty details of deliveries, issues of commodities, or account settlements, their priority was the service for the gods, and their economic pursuits revolved around it, with priestly personnel maintaining the cult and common temple dependants producing the basic resources.

Feeding the Gods

Proper care for the host of local and national deities was mandatory, as the prosperity of the country was perceived as depending on it. Dissatisfied or angry gods were dangerous; they brought about flood, drought, pestilence,

war, and disruption. Mankind had been created to provide them with food and drink, anoint them, keep their clothing in order, fashion furniture and adornments, entertain them, arrange their travels on festive occasions, and accommodate them in splendid and well-kept residences.

The temple economy was geared to providing everything that was needed for the sustenance and care of the gods. In the large temples, four meals a day were served that consisted of bread, meat, and beer as the basic provisions but in addition included rarer treats and delicacies as well as seasonal fruits. Light was provided with oil lamps and the ambience suffused with incense and aromatics. The order of magnitude becomes apparent from the fact that a temple such as the Eanna of Uruk used about 3000–4000 male lambs per year for sacrifices (Kozuh 2006: p. xiii). Nebuchadnezzar II prides himself in his inscriptions on having supplied to Nabû and his consort Nanaya, in Borsippa's Ezida alone, one fattened bull, sixteen sheep, a variety of fowl, fish and mice, eggs, vegetables, orchard fruits, ordinary and Dilmun dates, figs and raisins, honey, butter, cakes, milk, oil, three types of beer, and wine on a daily basis (Waerzeggers 2010: p. 114n. +512). Apart from the daily worship, there were monthly and yearly festivals as well as certain rites for special occasions.

Preparing meals from scratch with raw materials issued by the temple treasury kept a host of privileged specialists busy, such as bakers, butchers, brewers, oil pressers, the purvey functionaries who entered the sanctum and served the meals, and, in addition, singers and cultic performers as well as all those whose services behind the scenes were needed for a smooth running of the temple, such as gatekeepers, measurers, scribes, barbers, washermen, weavers, and goldsmiths.

Feeding the Priesthood

Once the gods had tasted and enjoyed the food, the tables were cleared, and the remainders distributed among those who had a stake in its preparation and the general care for the gods and were entitled to these proceeds by virtue of holding temple prebends: feeding the gods meant feeding the priesthood. The fact that 46 out of 102 published private archives from our period belonged to priestly families indicates their importance.

By serving the gods, Babylonia's noble families of old asserted their distinguished position within the urban society, as prebend ownership bestowed prestige and granted income. Although prebendary offices, together with their entitlement, were transmitted from father to son, it was the king who had the last say in approving new candidates for the service which gave him a "powerful instrument to keep track of local elite formation and to influence its dynamic" (Waerzeggers 2010: p. 54; cf. Beaulieu 1989: pp. 118–119).

The king was the highest-ranking prebendary and owned shares in the main sanctuaries as well as in some smaller shrines (Kleber 2008: p. 287). After the dynastic change, these prebends transferred to the Persian kings.

The remuneration for prebendary services was paid mainly in kind: in the shape of raw materials (barley, dates, or other surplus ingredients) as well as bread, beer, cake, and meat cuts from the sacrificial meals. For certain duties prebendaries could also draw a remuneration in silver. The prebendaries used the food stuffs for their households' consumption, but some commodities, especially perishables, were also for sale. Evidence from the butchers' archives in Borsippa includes delivery contracts for quantities of meat that go far beyond the needs of individual families and leave no doubt that it was meant to be sold by middlemen (Waerzeggers 2010: pp. 268–271).

Although these income rights had cultic duties attached to them, most of which could only be performed by men of the right descent who were able-bodied and ritually "pure," by the seventh century the prebends themselves had become the object of business transactions: their owners could use them as a pledge to secure a loan or sell them. Sales of prebends, however, were rare and prebendary rights were retained within a small group of distinguished families. Prices could fluctuate considerably and did not only depend on the value of the prebend's income, the obligations attached, the size and importance of the temple and its deity and the prestige of the profession but also, to a large degree, on non-economic factors.

Even persons who did not fit the requirements to perform the duties could own a prebend, as long as they hired some qualified person to perform them and were prepared to forego, thereby, part of the remuneration, much in the vein of an absentee landlord. Performance contracts among peers or members of the same priestly profession were also required by those who had amassed (through inheritance, marriage, or acquisition) more prebends than they could work. Such contracts also helped to more efficiently exploit miscellaneous shares scattered over small time periods or taking place at various sanctuaries.

The royal prebends also needed substitute service on the king's behalf. The performers received a part of the income (in some cases cash) while the remainder was regularly sent to the king by designated envoys, even to places as far as Tema in Arabia in the case of Nabonidus (Kleber 2008: p. 293). Portions of the income may have been converted into silver, but the king clearly desired some part of the comestibles as well, because of their divinely imbued properties. The king could also grant pieces of the royal remainder to persons whom he meant to honor.

Depending on the kind of work, some prebendary chores could be outsourced to hirelings or slaves, especially menial tasks outside the sacred area of limited access. This made some prebendal professions more profitable

than others. The laying of the sacrificial table or the temple singer's service, for example, did not lend themselves to outsourcing as they required the highest degree of initiation for access to the holy space and their performance lasted for lengthy periods. Temple bakers' or oxherds' prebends, by comparison, comprised more menial work with relatively short phases of purveyance.

Resources

The commodities that the temples required for their cult and, ultimately, for the sustenance of the priestly urban elite had to be self-produced or acquired through trade. To this end, the temples were endowed with land and common personnel since time immemorial and had received substantial further royal grants during the time of the Neo-Babylonian empire. Nabonidus, for example, speaks of 2850 captives from Cilicia whom he dedicated to Bēl, Nabû, and Nergal to increase their temples' workforce. The Ebabbar temple is known to have acquired a large estate south of Babylon during the reign of Nabopolassar from private owners (Jursa 2010: p. 346). There is even evidence suggesting that the Ebabbar sent personnel to the Ḫabūr region outside Babylonia to establish a new estate (Jursa 2010: p. 348).

Agriculture was the main source of income for the temples which specialized in certain agrarian goods according to the environmental conditions. While Sippar's Ebabbar in the north extended and intensified date palm cultivation at the expense of grain production and raised money from the sale of dates, the cash crop of Eanna in the south was wool, most of which was sold to the royal household (Jursa 2010: p. 225).

The Workforce

The main workforce consisted of temple dependants of *širku* status – literally: “given” people. They either descended from *širku* parents, or they themselves had been granted to the temple by the king or royal officials or dedicated by their parents (in case they were freeborn) or their master (in case they had been slaves). These persons were free in the sense that they did not belong to an individual and they could not be sold elsewhere. Unlike chattel slaves, they could own property and pass it on to the next generation; their family relations were respected and families lived together. Being part of the temple household, they owed service to their temple and were assigned their tasks by the administration. In return, they could claim maintenance and lodging, even when sick or unable to work.

These *širkus* received rations or, rather, salaries in kind. The amounts paid to *širkus* for full-time work in the inner city of Sippar comprised about 180 l of barley or dates per month. The number of workmen at the time of Nabonidus is estimated at about 145 *širkus* with full rations and, in addition, nearly the same number of minors on half rations. This required about 3000 *kur* (c. 540 000 l) per year for this relatively small group alone. Furthermore, *širkus* received a wool allowance of 10 *minas* (c. 5 kg, amounting to 600–900 kg in total per year). Married men were provided with clothes by their wives. Widows had to deliver an equivalent amount of textiles to the temple for provisioning young men without family and those performing corvée service off-site.

Some *širkus* pursued work outside the temple and paid a kind of rental fee or wage equivalent (*mandattu*) for themselves to the temple, especially when they could achieve above-average salaries with professional work. Diachronic and cross-cultural comparison shows that Babylonian wage-standards rank well above average in pre-industrial societies but seem to have declined during the Achaemenid period (Jursa 2010: pp. 811–812). For the temples, hiring workers was more expensive than employing their own staff, but demands by the crown for corvée could often only be met by hiring outsiders.

Tilling the Land and Tending the Gardens

The limiting factors for the temples' agricultural output were access to water, draft animals and manpower. Records from Eanna and Ebabbar indicate that the temples owned more land than they could work with their personnel. Therefore, they leased part of their domains to outsiders under sharecropping terms where the tenants worked independently with their own tools and supplies and could keep at least half of the yield. This was the less attractive option for the temple in comparison to direct management with their own *širkus* farming the land.

Temple farmers lived with their families in the countryside on certain estates where they can be shown to have stayed over generations. They were, however, not given individual land leases and subleases. Rather, the authorities assigned them certain plots and charged a fixed rent that comprised nearly the entire crop. As a result, these temple farmers lived at subsistence level with little chance for improvement and little incentive to increase productivity. The temple supplied the necessary equipment, especially draft animals, seed, and rations and routinely gave them plots that were larger than they were able to work. It is, therefore, not surprising that the temple farmers tried to lighten their workload and generate some extra income by subletting parts of their assigned plots to sharecroppers or by providing the temple's draft animals to

outsiders at a fee. From the administration's perspective, this was a waste of assets, given that it was difficult to supply enough plow teams at full strength to the temple farmers themselves. Having sharecroppers on land that exceeded the temple farmers' capacity resulted in overall higher returns for the temple and was in the temple's interest. Accommodating, however, a level of sub-leasing through sharecropping within the system of direct management on a large scale meant a serious loss in income for the temple. The magnitude of this problem becomes apparent when in 571 BCE the royal commissioner in charge of the Eanna gathered the foremen of the temple farmers to make them swear, by threat of death, not to sublet their assigned plots and plows. (Janković 2005).

In an attempt to increase productivity, from the late reign of Nebuchadnezzar II onwards, on royal instigation, the temples gradually introduced a new managerial system which amounted to outsourcing the temples' management of most of their arable and garden land (Jursa 2010: p. 295). Large tracts of temple lands, including personnel and equipment, were let to wealthy individuals (temple officials or even outsiders, probably some royal protégées) for a fixed amount, payable to the temple. Whether or not the leaseholders achieved a profit for themselves depended on their competence, organizational skills, and the presence or absence of favorable circumstances (e.g. weather and pests). For the temples, this arrangement guaranteed a reliable income in produce. It is apparent that the general rent farmers had to invest some capital of their own for tools and draft animals, to improve overall performance, which the temple was unable to mobilize on the same order of magnitude. These general rent farmers took a considerable risk as they had to make up for any shortfall from their private property. It is, therefore, not surprising to hear of individuals who relinquished their concessions in the face of unsurmountable backlogs (MacGinnis 2006–2007), and the institution may have shared some characteristics with the *liturgies* known from classical sources.

Of the gardens that belonged to the temples, some were allotted to prebendaries who provided the fruits for the offerings. These plots were managed like any private property albeit under the obligation to deliver a quota of first-class produce to the temple. The majority of the temple's date orchards, however, were rented out to tenants who could sub-let them to individual gardeners, also to outsiders. Nearly the entire yield of the trees was owed to the temple which used it to pay wages or sold it. The anticipated yield was estimated some weeks before the harvest, while still on the tree, by a commission of temple administrators and scribes who had to oblige themselves under oath not to be too lenient, not to accept any bribes, and not to disadvantage the small tenants. These provisions clearly show the potential pitfalls of the system. The tenant received a remuneration in kind for his work, especially for tasks such as dig-

ging to improve the soil quality and, most likely, profited from some by-products grown under the trees. The regime of general rent contracts, as mentioned before with regard to arable land, was also applied to the temple's date gardens, as well as to the tithe collection from private fields within the temple's zone of influence and the rental fees from temple-owned houses in the city.

Animal Husbandry: Sheep and Cattle

The temples owned large flocks of sheep, mainly for the purpose of providing the sacrificial animals (unblemished male lambs) and for producing wool. The Eanna temple's regime is the best documented. The temple contracted out most of the sheep herding and breeding (the "external" livestock management) to outside herdsmen who have been described as "urban businessmen with rural interests and contacts" (Kozuh 2006: p. 111). They acted much in the vein of other kinds of entrepreneurs, entrusting the flocks to various shepherds, arranging for access to pastures and taking responsibility for supplying a given yearly quota of lambs and wool to the temple. The individual shepherds also tended their own flocks and drove the animals to pastures up to 500 km away from Uruk. Recent estimates by Kozuh assume that there were over 120 herdsmen at any one time with 74 000–90 000 sheep in total which roamed away from Uruk most of the time. During the sheering season they returned to the temple for the wool harvest. Alternatively, if they could not return, the sheep were shorn in the countryside, the wool was sold and the Eanna received the silver income (Jursa 2010: p. 595 n. 3210).

At shearing, the animals from the last lambing season were divided. The temple collected about 1200 male lambs in total on the spot to prepare them for sacrifice in the local fattening stables. These facilities in Uruk and nearby held about 1400 animals, which amounts to only one-third of their yearly need in sacrificial lambs. Most of the temple's livestock was stored "on the hoof" in less accessible regions, and suitable animals had to be claimed and driven to Uruk regularly. For this purpose, temple envoys traveled the pastures to gather animals, legitimizing their seizures by producing a specific temple staff that was imbued with this power.

Apart from male lambs needed for the cult, the temple also claimed two-thirds of the female offspring which were marked with a star-shaped iron as the property of Ištar of Uruk and remained with the shepherds for breeding. The fact that the herds grazed far from Uruk most of the time suggests that the shepherds profited from the dairy products (Kozuh 2006: p. 117).

Information on cattle breeding from the temple archives is comparatively scarce. Prebendary oxherds supplied the sacrificial animals, oxen of supreme quality, as well as cow's milk, but their activities left little trace in the temples' administrative records. Some details, however, can be gleaned from the oxherd family's private archives (Waerzeggers: pp. 273–300). When the temple stables

could not provide enough animals, they had to be acquired from outside sources. This even happened at times to Esagila, as records from the temple slaughterer's archive reveal (Wunsch 2014).

Cattle were further needed in large numbers during the plowing season, as the use of draft animals and seeder plows greatly improved efficiency. For a plow team, four oxen or cows were needed: two trained, leading animals and two immediately before the plow that did the heavier duty, preferably supplemented by two spare animals to allow rotation. Only in an institutional context do we find a number of cattle sufficient to form such teams but, even there, the texts attest to a constant shortage of animals.

Birds and Fish

Birds and fish comprised part of the gods' diet. Nebuchadnezzar II claims to have (re)introduced bird offerings at Babylon and Borsippa, and offering lists attest to the usage of eggs as well (Janković 2005 p. 23). The breeding and fattening of birds (mainly ducks but also geese and doves) were organized on similar terms as those for sheep. Apart from their use in the cult the texts attest to birds being sold by the temple to raise income. Furthermore, private individuals on occasion gifted birds to the temple. The temple employed a considerable number of bird catchers targeting wild animals in the surroundings, especially during the migration season, with nets and traps.

The water courses and ponds in the countryside provided fish for the gods' table. Prebendary fishermen supplied the necessary quantities according to their quota per work shift (there were, for example, three shifts for ten days each per month, with six fishermen assigned to each shift, at the Eanna; Kleber 2004: pp. 135–136) and had to guarantee the flawless quality of the catch. The texts attest to problems in quantity and quality, as they mention deliveries of foul fish and quarrels between the prebendaries who should have had privileged access to the temples' waters and ordinary fishermen who encroached on their territory, resulting in a diminished catch.

Craftsmen

Among the craftsmen working for the temple we find carpenters, black- and coppersmiths, wool and linen weavers, tailors, washermen and cleaners, leather workers, goldsmiths and jewelers who produced not just goods for use in the temples but also for sale (Bongenaar 1997: chapter iv; Zawadzki 2006; Payne 2008). Also noteworthy is the production of tools and weapons. The majority of the craftsmen were temple dependants (*širkus*) working in the temple workshops or the inner city who drew an income from the temple. A certain

number of prebendary craftsmen were needed for work assignments on cultic inventory or the temple building itself, especially in the inner area of limited access. As is the case with other prebendary professions, their work was linked to a specific temple, organized by time periods, and remunerated with prebendary disbursements in commodities or silver.

Tax and Corvée Obligations

Under the Neo-Babylonian kings, large-scale construction projects were under way that did not only create and maintain prestigious monumental buildings but also canals, irrigation devices, and other infrastructure. The temples, profiting from improved access to water and traffic routes, had to supply in turn part of their workforce temporarily for corvée labor or auxiliary military service. As corvée duties often took place at a distance, laborers needed supplies for their travels. Temple contingents were often understaffed and had to be supplemented by hirelings. In Achaemenid times, the system remained in place and “going to Elam” served as a blanket term to describe such duties. It shows that, by then, their focus had shifted eastward.

Conclusion

In the Neo-Babylonian and early Achaemenid period the Babylonian temples were major economic entities that controlled substantial resources: large tracts of land, flocks of countless animals, and a pool of skilled and menial labor in the urban centers. Their economic activities revolved around the service for the gods but dovetailed with the outside economy to a large degree. They enjoyed royal sponsorship but, in return, their well-organized workforce was conscripted for large-scale royal building and infrastructure projects and military operations. This made them both a desirable resource and a possible threat for any ruler as their economic potential could translate into real power in times of political crisis.

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FURTHER READING

A comprehensive and up-to-date survey of the Babylonian economy is provided by Jursa (2010). Kozuh, M. (2008) is a concise description of temples as economic entities and their role in Babylonian society. Waerzeggers (2010) is a detailed study of one specific temple, the urban elite families who furnish the priestly staff, their cultic duties and privileges, and the practice of worship. Bongenaar (1997) investigates similar aspects regarding the Sippar temple on the basis of administrative records.

CHAPTER 69

Babylonian Entrepreneurs

Caroline Waerzeggers

Introduction

The Persian conquest of Mesopotamia in 539 BCE was a decisive moment in the history of southern Mesopotamia. Native Babylonian kingship came to an end and a long period of foreign domination began. The transition from Babylonian to Persian rule happened smoothly, however, with little impact on the lives of either the rich or the poor. Thousands of cuneiform records attest to continuities in royal ideology (Kuhrt 1983, 1992, 2007a,b), high office and institutional management (Bongenaar 1997; Jursa 2007; Kleber 2008; Waerzeggers 2010a), art (Ehrenberg 1999, 2007), archival practice and daily life (e.g. Wunsch 1993, 2000a; Jursa 1999, 2005a; Baker 2004). Change set in more perceptively, however, under the fourth king, Darius the Great, who introduced measures to improve control over the Babylonian satrapy after it rebelled twice in the beginning of his reign (522–521 BCE; Joannès 1997: p. 282). In recent years, the reign of Xerxes, who crushed two more rebellions in Babylonia and, in doing so, caused a caesura in the cuneiform record, has been described in terms of discontinuity (Kessler 2004; Waerzeggers 2004; Oelsner 2007; Baker 2008), but whether any damage was caused to Babylonian cities, their inhabitants, and their economy in the aftermath of the revolts is a fiercely debated topic (George 2010; Kuhrt 2010; Kuntner and Heinsch 2013; Henkelman et al. 2011). The question of continuity/change in fifth

century BCE Babylonia is a topic that requires up-to-date research (see, for now, van Driel 1987 and Kuhrt 1987).

One group in Babylonian society whose fortunes can be studied quite effectively in the cuneiform record of the Persian period are the so-called “entrepreneurs.” Michael Jursa recently analyzed the private sector of the Babylonian economy in Weberian terms as consisting of two, essentially opposite, business profiles: “rentiers” and “entrepreneurs” (Jursa 2004, 2010: especially pp. 282–294, 764–768). Individuals in the former group mostly earned their income from inherited property and risk-free entitlements, whereas those in the latter group competed for state contracts and in local and international markets as traders, producers, retailers, and wholesalers. Activities that may be connected with the entrepreneurial profile include, among others, agricultural contracting, business partnerships (known under the Babylonian term *harrānu*), domestic and interregional trade, and tax farming. Rentiers typically displayed a more conservative business portfolio and a tendency to replicate existing social structures through inheritance and marriage practice, whereas entrepreneurs achieved greater social mobility and diversity. Yet, despite differences of economic mentality, it would be wrong to claim that strict social barriers existed between the two groups. Entrepreneurial and rentier-type families did intermarry and a certain measure of permeability characterizes the boundaries suggested by this model on both sides.

Sources

The cuneiform sources that are at our disposal to study the fortunes of Babylonian entrepreneurs consist of business contracts, property deeds (e.g. donations, sales), memoranda, lists and administrative notes written in the course of their activities, as well as family records (e.g. testaments, marriage contracts) recorded at important junctures of their private lives. The archives of several entrepreneurial families from the sixth to fourth centuries BCE have come down to us, mostly discovered during uncontrolled or insufficiently recorded digs in Iraq at the end of the nineteenth century (Jursa 2005a). These sources are valuable, but a quick overview will reveal their patchiness and uneven distribution, in terms of both geographical and chronological scope. This is due to a number of factors, including archival practice, the widespread use of Aramaic among traders, the happenstance of archeological discovery, the incomplete record of publication, and the general structure of the Neo-Babylonian text corpus, which declines sharply in the second year of Xerxes after the Babylonian revolts (484 BCE; Waerzeggers 2004).

Overview

The “long sixth century BCE” (Jursa 2010: p. 5), of which the reigns of the first Persian kings constitute the second half, is one of the best-documented epochs in Mesopotamian history. The Persian conquest of 539 BCE by no means constitutes a break in the archival material and scholars who study the social and economic history of Babylonia in this period see little sense in separating the so-called Chaldean or Neo-Babylonian period (626–539 BCE) from the Early Persian period (539–484 BCE). Even high officials like the *šākin-māti* initially remained in place, and outside the political arena continuity was certainly the norm. Only one private archive comes to an end around the time when Cyrus conquers Babylonia (Dullupu), as opposed to over 40 archives that remain unaffected by the events (Jursa 2005a). This is indicative of deep-rooted continuities easing the period of transition (Jursa 2007). In keeping with this general trend, we find no clear evidence of setbacks among the entrepreneurial families of Babylonia at the time of the Persian conquest. On the contrary, a number of them consolidated and ameliorated their positions in the new context. This is illustrated, among others, by the Egibi archive. With some 1700 tablets, this is the largest Neo-Babylonian private archive to date. It spans five generations from the early sixth century BCE to the second year of Xerxes. The archive is not yet fully published but considerable progress has been made in the last 20 years (see *Further reading* below). Of humble origins, the Egibi family rose to prominence in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II (Wunsch 2000a, 2007). They initially made their fortune in the commodity trade – shipping food staples from the fields around Babylon to its inner-city markets, temples, and palaces – but their activities soon branched off in all directions that were open to entrepreneurs in the sixth century BCE, including the food industry, tax farming, and agricultural management (Wunsch 2000b: pp. 97–98, 2007: pp. 236–238). Banking was not part of the family’s activities, despite the popular notion of the Egibis as a “banking house” in older literature (Wunsch 2002: pp. 247–249; Jursa 2010: p. 245). The fact that the Egibis were able to forge and maintain close ties with the highest political circles, in the Babylonian as well as the Persian era, bears witness not only to fundamental continuities between the two political periods, but also to the Egibis’ business accumen and the elasticity of their social network, which was built on opportune marriages with competing families like the Nūr-Sîns (Wunsch 1993, 1995).

Many more archives of Babylonian entrepreneurs show similar forms of adaptability to the new political order. Marduk-šumu-ibni, the son of Ṭābia of the Sîn-ilī family, is a case in point (Wunsch 1988; Jursa 2005a: pp. 69–71). He was a contemporary of the Egibis, but his archive unfortunately shows little or no connection to their world; it is therefore difficult to create a coherent

picture of the social landscape of Babylon's business world on the basis of this evidence. In Larsa in southern Babylonia, the sons of Itti-Šamaš-balāṭu also continued their various strands of business under Persian rule. Their archive is particularly interesting for documenting the integration of entrepreneurial and rentier-type families in Babylonian society (Jursa 2010: pp. 290, 295). This dynamic had nothing to do with the advent of the Persian Empire; but, as it manifested itself in various Babylonian cities around this time, it should be mentioned here. One of the more promising corpora with a bearing on the issue of change and continuity in the business realm at the time of the Persian conquest comes from Sippar (Jursa 2005a: pp. 120–132), not because of its size or density (it is actually quite modest compared to some of the others), but because of its diversity of perspective, being composed of many interlocking archives and dossiers that together document a broad section of the local business community (Bongenaar 2000). This evidence can be combined with the local temple archive (Ebabbar) to reconstruct business networks and interactions between private entrepreneurs and institutions (Bongenaar 2000), for instance in the area of tithe farming (Jursa 1998). The Eanna archive from Uruk offers similar opportunities (Jursa 2010), but in this case, the evidence cannot be combined with independent private material; the few entrepreneurial archives from this town end before the advent of the Persian Empire (Jursa 2005a: pp. 141, 143–146). The Eanna archive is, however, particularly informative on foreign trade (Joannès 1999: pp. 184–189; Jursa 2010: pp. 76–77, 93); for this purpose, the temple relied on independent merchants as intermediaries. Entrepreneurial activities in other Babylonian cities – such as in Kish, Cutha, and Nippur – are only scarcely documented for the early Persian period (Jursa 2005a: pp. 105, 149, 2005b).

After the revolts against Xerxes (484 BCE), the number of surviving cuneiform texts drops. The Murašû archive is the most important source on Babylonian entrepreneurship in the mature Achaemenid Empire (Stolper 1985a,b, 2001; Jursa 2010: p. 199). This family engaged in agricultural contracting and short-term credit operations with owners of state-assigned land in the region around Nippur in the second half of the fifth century BCE. Their clients consisted, on the one hand, of smallholders of bow fiefs and other service land, and, on the other hand, of high imperial officials who owned estates in the vicinity. The late fifth century BCE Kasr archive from Babylon belongs to one such high-level estate owner, governor Bēlšunu (Pedersén 2005: pp. 144–184; Stolper 1990, 1995, 1999, 2004). The archive, which is largely unpublished, allows a glimpse of the commercial activities that were carried out on and around such estates by personnel and local entrepreneurs (Stolper 1995; Jursa 2010). The Tatannu archive provides similar perspectives (Jursa 2005a: pp. 94–97), as does, on a smaller scale, the dossier of Bēl-ana-mērehti from Kish (Jursa 2010: p. 204). Finally, mention should be made of the

Abu-ul-ide archive, which documents a commercial activity that has recently been described as a form of “banking” (Jursa 2010: p. 245).

Limitations

One limitation of our sources is immediately apparent in this brief overview. Only Babylonian families settled in (certain of) the big cities of northern and central Babylonia are documented, but their activities account for only a small fraction of the total bulk of trade carried out in the alluvial plain of Euphrates and Tigris at the time. For instance, non-Babylonian merchants operated in substantial numbers along the riverine routes of Mesopotamia (Oppenheim 1967; Joannès 1999: p. 188; Jursa 2004), both as traveling traders and as members of trading diasporas settled at important junctures. These communities only appear to us in the cuneiform record of Babylonian entrepreneurs, who were at once their colleagues and competitors. The positive contribution of such minorities to the activities of Babylonian businessmen and the Babylonian economy in general remains to be studied. Collaboration could take many guises, as seen for instance in the archive of Marduk-rēmanni who invested in a business partnership with a Syrian merchant settled in Sippar and who regularly relied on members of this community to act as witnesses to his business records. The presence of Syrian merchants in Babylon and the settlement of Syrian and Judean exilic communities in the hinterland of Nippur, may all have contributed to the creation of a commercial network, of which only the most basic outlines are known today. An investigation of the social dimension of entrepreneurial activity would be a welcome addition to the recent work done on its legal and economic aspects.

Babylonian Entrepreneurs in the Empire

How did the Persian Empire affect the activities of Babylonian entrepreneurs? The conquest of 539 BCE did not cause upheaval, as we have seen, but the imperial context nonetheless created opportunities and challenges that affected local business patterns. For instance, following the establishment of Persian rule, a widening of geographical horizons is documented in several of the archives listed above, including the temple archives of Ebabbar and Eanna where Across-the-River is regularly mentioned as the place where trade goods are to be procured (MacGinnis 2004; Jursa 2010: p. 76–77). Fundamental changes in the nature of Babylonian entrepreneurship have also been observed. The Egibi archive, thanks to its generous time span covering most of the sixth and early fifth centuries BCE, shows that this family adapted its business portfolio in reaction to and in keeping with changes in Darius’ tax policy (Jursa

2010: p. 288 n. 1732). The interplay between new imperial processes and existing internal dynamics and their impact on the economic and social parameters of Babylonian enterprise are not yet fully understood. Given the extraordinary richness of the cuneiform text corpus dating to the “long sixth century,” this is a topic that merits further research. Here, I will concentrate on two possible approaches to the subject.

Interactions

Interactions between Babylonian entrepreneurs and the Persian court or high-ranking imperial officials are not very well documented, but it is clear that some Babylonians enjoyed relatively easy access to high levels of state. A good case study of Persian-Babylonian interactions and their development is offered by the archive of the Egibi family. Itti-Marduk-balāṭu, the man who headed this family at the time of the Persian conquest, made at least nine excursions to Iran during the first 15 years of Persian rule in Babylonia (Joannès 2005). On these occasions he visited several royal cities, including Ecbatana, the former capital of the Median state. The purpose of these visits is debated. Some scholars interpret them in terms of commercial ventures to recently opened markets in the east (Zadok 1976; Dandamaev 1986; Zawadzki 1994). Others rather emphasize the political dimension of these trips and characterize them as royal summons or court visits (e.g. Olmstead 1948: p. 58; Jursa 2004: p. 130, 2010: p. 225 n. 1309; Joannès 2005; Tolini 2011). Court visits became a fixed ingredient of Babylonian-Persian relations in the reign of Darius the Great (see below), but such routines had not yet been established at the time when Itti-Marduk-balāṭu went on his first Iranian voyage in 537 BCE. The uncertainty, and even anxiety, that surrounded this trip is evidenced by the testament that he drew up in preparation (Wunsch 1995).

Soon after his troubled accession, Darius I started work on a new palace in the former Elamite capital of Susa, gathering labor and resources from across the Empire, including Babylonia (see most recently Briant 2010). Cuneiform records document the Babylonian contribution from c. 516 BCE onwards (Waerzeggers 2010b). Entrepreneurs participated in this project in various capacities, as tax payers, for instance, but also as tax collectors, shipping agents, and contractors. They also featured among the Babylonian delegations that regularly made their appearance in Susa to greet and sustain the royal court during its seasonal stays at the new palace. These gatherings created an opportunity for Babylonian entrepreneurs to meet courtiers and presumably to interact with members of the royal household, but they also turned Susa into an important center of Babylonian activity outside Babylonia. Some cuneiform tablets in the Babylonian language have been

found on the site (Joannès 1990), but most information about Babylonian interests in Elam is to be gleaned from archives discovered in southern Iraq (Waerzeggers 2010b).

Within Babylonia itself, important points of contact between local entrepreneurs and high office-holders were the landed estates of Persian notables. Members of the royal family, army officials, satraps and governors received such estates in gift from the Great King (Stolper 1985a: pp. 52–69; Briant 2002: pp. 461–463). Holdings assigned in this way often lay widely scattered throughout the Empire, as illustrated by the case of Arshama, a fifth century BCE satrap of Egypt who owned estates in the area of Nippur and in Egypt (Briant 2006). Absent landowners like Arshama relied on private personnel (bailiffs, slaves) and local entrepreneurs to manage these estates. Several archives of Babylonian care-takers and contractors are preserved (Jursa 2010: pp. 197–198); the Murašûs of Nippur and the Egibis of Babylon are foremost among them (Stolper 1985a: pp. 52–69; Wunsch 2000b: p. 107; Abraham 2004: pp. 127–130). Their texts reveal the embedded nature of these estates in local social and economic structures. Although the high-ranking landowner rather appears as a remote figure in these texts, the personnel that lived on the estate interacted frequently, and sometimes very closely, with local entrepreneurs. The archive of a late sixth century BCE entrepreneur from Sippar sheds light on the creation and maintenance of such ties between the estate personnel of an imperial official and a local Babylonian businessman. Such collaboration created professional and social opportunities for locals, as can be seen in the transfer of an erstwhile employee of the Murašû family into the service of satrap Arshama (Stolper 1985a: p. 65).

A Microhistorical Approach

At the time when Cyrus conquered southern Mesopotamia, this region experienced an extended period of economic growth (Jursa 2010). Measuring the impact of new imperial processes against such long-term internal developments is difficult. One possible approach to this complex subject is to reduce the unit of observation and study the entanglement of these dynamics in a controlled and well-documented setting. This approach was first developed by early modern Italian microhistorians in the 1970s and 1980s, and since then it has been successfully applied in many areas of history (see Trivellato 2011 for an appraisal). Even the most extraordinary event does not happen outside the framework of fundamental patterns and microhistorians believe that by reconstructing the context of any particular manifestation (for instance, a single life, a particular town, an unusual event) those parameters may be revealed with clarity, if only partially. A microhistorical approach seems to be particularly promising for the historian of Achaemenid Babylonia, who works with a

corpus that is at the same time very rich and very patchy. Certain parts of the corpus provide the level of detail required for a qualitative study of this nature, while the corpus as a whole is not dense enough to approach the question of interplay between complex dynamics like economic growth, social change and imperial politics in a purely quantitative manner. As an example, let us consider Marduk-nāṣir-apli, the head of the Egibi family in the reign of Darius the Great (Abraham 2004). The life of this man offers suitable material for micro-historical analysis: with over 400 preserved texts, his generation is the best documented of the Egibi family. His active life spans the entire reign of Darius the Great and offers an excellent opportunity to study the impact of this king's reforms on one of Babylon's most prolific, or indeed best-known, "business houses." As he belongs to the fourth documented generation of his family, his activities can be compared with those of his father, grandfather, and great-grandfather who were active in the period from Nabopolassar to Cambyses. In this way, continuity and change can be tracked in a "controlled" setting, i.e. within a single family. Studies by Kathleen Abraham (2004) and Cornelia Wunsch (2000b, 2010) reveal significant developments in the family's portfolio in the reign of Darius that cannot be attributed to a better documentary basis alone. Tax farming contracts become a major source of income and the number of tax loans extended by the family increases. In keeping with this development, the figure of the provincial governor (*šākin-ṭēmi*) becomes more prominent as his office was in charge of awarding such tax collecting contracts. Marduk-nāṣir-apli's father began to be involved with this person toward the end of Cambyses' reign (Wunsch 2000b: p. 105 n. 28) and it seems possible that his son profited from this association during his own long career.

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SECTION VII

SOCIETY AND POLITICS

CHAPTER 70

The Residences

Bruno Jacobs

This chapter will deal primarily with the royal residences that are presented as capitals of the empire by classical sources, i.e. Pasargadae and the cities that were, as Athenaeus (12.513f) tells us, periodically visited by the Persian kings during their annual round trip (see below), i.e. Susa, Persepolis, Ecbatana, and Babylon. This enumeration does, of course, stem from a post-Alexander source, but the places named are, certainly not by chance, precisely those which not only provide Achaemenid inscriptions, but – with the exception of Ecbatana – were also furnished with sculptures in Achaemenid court style (see Chapter 55 Achaemenid Art – Art in the Achaemenid Empire). That Ecbatana, whose Achaemenid levels have not so far been found, also belongs here seems to be indicated by isolated finds of column bases (some inscribed) from a variety of buildings and by building inscriptions on tablets of precious metal (DHa, D₂Ha, D₂Hb, A₂Hc) – always assuming that these are genuine and do originate from this site.¹

The Residences in the Imperial Capitals

Foundations and Re-foundations

An essential distinction amongst the places named above is that those situated in Fārs were new foundations, whereas the residences in the Mesopotamian lowlands and in Khuzestān (Babylon and Susa) looked back on thousands of years of history. Even Ecbatana was a place with background. The Nabonidus Chronicle identifies it as the residence of the Median king Ištumegu/Astyages

A Companion to the Achaemenid Persian Empire, Volume II, First Edition.

Edited by Bruno Jacobs and Robert Rollinger.

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and as the place from which Cyrus removed captured loot after his victory over that ruler (Chronicle 7: II 3–4; Grayson 1975: p. 106).

One of the two new foundations, Pasargadae, is closely associated with the name of Cyrus the Great (Curt. 5.6.10; Strab. 15.3.8). The other one, Persepolis, goes back to Darius I, and was, as the king declares in an inscription, erected at a place that was previously unoccupied (DPf §2) an assertion that is, however, substantially relativized i.a. by the new discoveries at Tol-e Ajori, where a copy of the Babylonian Istar Gate has been uncovered that can most likely be dated to the time of Cyrus II (Askari Chaverdi et al. 2017). Among the remaining (older) capitals Babylon seems to have been of special importance for Cyrus: at any rate, both the Cyrus Cylinder (Schaudig 2001: pp. 550–556) and the Nabonidus Chronicle (Grayson 1975: pp. 104–111) link him to this city as its conqueror and benefactor.

By contrast, it cannot be shown that Ecbatana was of special importance for Cyrus and we cannot decide whether it was of greater or lesser interest to him than Susa, a city which he must also have conquered at some stage (Boucharlat 1997a: pp. 56–57)² but to which he subsequently paid no particular attention. Both places only acquired greater significance for Persian kings from the time of Darius I onwards. In the case of Susa this can be demonstrated by building activity. In that of Ecbatana we have Pliny's report that Darius relocated it (n.h. 6.116), although we can neither establish whether this is true nor, if it is, appraise the extent or significance of what Darius did. If we accept what Pliny says, evidence of Achaemenid building activity is most likely to come to light in that part of the site in which excavations have so far remained fruitless (Sarraf 2003; but see Chapter 16 Media).

A Metropolis, a Citadel, and “Empty Cities”

Ecbatana

Paucity of evidence means that Ecbatana will play only a minor role in what follows. Such architectural elements as have been found there apparently stem from a number of distinct buildings of Achaemenid date but cannot be associated with an excavated ground plan. The inscription A₂Hb refers to an *apadāna*, thereby using the term that was also applied to the large columned hall at Susa, but there is no corresponding archeological evidence. It is also next to impossible to assess the extent of architectural development (cf. Chapter 16 Media). But if Achaemenid Ecbatana had as low a building density as Pasargadae or Susa (see below), it would be less surprising that attempts to discover Achaemenid strata underneath modern Hamadan have so far been unsuccessful.

Pasargadae

The other residences present very different pictures one from another. The appearance of Pasargadae (Figures 15.1 and 70.1) would probably have been

the most surprising for a modern spectator (Henkelman 2012: pp. 940–943). There was no fortification, only a modest boundary wall (Stronach 2001: p. 96). An imposing gate (R), not integrated into this or any other wall, a handful of palaces (S, P) and pavilions (A, B), the enigmatic Zendan-e Soleiman and the tomb of Cyrus are loosely scattered within a spacious area that was well-watered and partly wooded (Stronach 1978: Fig. 3; Stronach 1989: pp. 480–483; Boucharlat 1997b: p. 220; Boucharlat 2011: pp. 560–564; Benech et al. 2012: pp. 13–23, 28–29; Grob 2017) – the tomb of Cyrus is said to have been situated within a grove (Arr. Anab. 6.29.4; Strab. 15.3.7; cf. Henkelman 2008a: pp. 431–432), which must correspond to the *paradeisos* mentioned on tablet NN 2259 from Persepolis (Henkelman 2008a: pp. 433–434). It is true that geophysical surveys have demonstrated that there were several other previously unknown structures within this vast space, west of the palace area and south of the Zendan (Boucharlat 2001: pp. 117–118; Boucharlat and Benech 2002: pp. 24–29 fig. 11–15; Boucharlat 2003b; 2009: pp. 56–57; Benech et al. 2012); the most important sector may have been, as R. Boucharlat has suggested, north of Tall-e Takht. But, even so, the building density was extremely low.

Further to the southwest, beyond Tang-e Bolāghi, another *paradeisos* can be conjectured (Boucharlat 2011: pp. 566–572).

Susa

So far as building density is concerned, Susa (Figures 15.5 and 70.1) provides a surprisingly similar picture. Architectural activity in Achaemenid times was concentrated on the so-called *Tell de l'Apadana*, on top of which the eponymous hall was erected in front of an extensive palace of Mesopotamian type. A road leads up to this complex from the east via the *Ville Royale* tell, passing through a sequence of three imposing gates, the first (the *Porte des Artisans*) situated on the eastern side of the tell, the second (the Propylaea) in its north-western part, and the third (the Gate of Darius) on the eastern side of the *Tell de l'Apadana*, beyond a deep ravine, which separates the two tells and was bridged by a causeway (for a resumé of the record see Ladiray 2010; Henkelman 2012: pp. 950–955).

Trial trenches on the *Ville Royale* tell provided no evidence of further building activity in Achaemenid times (Curtis 1983: pp. 10–13), but it is possible (though disputed) that there was an Achaemenid era building in the southernmost part of the tell, on the so-called *Donjon*. Building material displaced from other structures was found there, but also gravel foundations, which may well be Achaemenid in date (Martinez-Sève 1996: pp. 174–175; on the foundation technique cf. Ladiray 2010: pp. 161–163). But there is insufficient space for the “palace” that was once thought to have existed here (Boucharlat 2010: pp. 380–383).

On the southern border of the acropolis remains were found, which Boucharlat is inclined to interpret as part of a fortification and date to the Achaemenid

epoch. The construction may have had a military purpose, but could also have served to protect precious objects (Boucharlat 2010: pp. 375–377).

A second center of Achaemenid building activity lies opposite the main city on the west side of the Šāhūr: a site of about 4 ha in area, provided with another – certainly smaller – columned hall of the *apadāna*-type (Bâtiment I), as well as an only vaguely reconstructible building on the northwestern corner of the latter (Bâtiment II) and a building, also to the west (Bâtiment III), for whose original appearance evidence is provided only by foundations. The last-named building lay on a terrace and, together with the others, bordered on a garden (Boucharlat and Labrousse 1979: pp. 24–61; Boucharlat 2010: pp. 385–409).

Where the sanctuary mentioned by Arrian (6.27.5) was situated is unknown, and the same goes for the statue of Anāhitā to which Berossus refers (Clem. Alex. 5.65.3; BNJ 680 F11). The generally low density of buildings seems to be in line with the fact that in Babylonian texts Susa is repeatedly tagged with the determinative URU, which suggests that from a Babylonian point of view it was qualified as a medium-sized city (Waezegggers 2010: pp. 793–794).

Persepolis

The picture at Persepolis (Figures 70.1 and 70.2) is entirely different. Here we have a citadel densely covered with buildings, although it must not be forgotten that development of the site took place over a considerable time span (Schmidt 1953; most recently Henkelman 2012: pp. 943–950). The complex is surrounded by a terrace wall of ashlar masonry which, in its highest part facing the plain, is up to 18 m high. A mudbrick wall with five towers flanks the terrace on the east, and another wall with 25 towers runs along the crest of the Kuh-e Rahmat (Kleiss 1992; Mousavi 1992). The existence of a mudbrick wall on the east and the fact that the walls are of quite different height on each side of the terrace have led to the suggestion that there was additional mudbrick construction on top of some stretches of the ashlar masonry. But this cannot have been true either of the west side, where there had to be an unrestricted view from the plain of the monumental Gate of All Lands and Apadana, or of the southwest side, where a parapet stood on the ashlar wall (Tilia 1969, 1972: pp. 61–62, Fig. 125–129).

The northern part of the terrace was dominated by two huge columned halls, the so-called *apadāna*, erected by Darius I, and the Throne Hall which was constructed during the reigns of Xerxes I and Artaxerxes I, and by two large gateways, the Gate of All Lands and the Unfinished Gate. This part can therefore be identified as the official and ceremonial sector. The so-called Tripylon connects it with the southern part of the terrace, where the buildings are composed of smaller units but also marked by a certain uniformity of

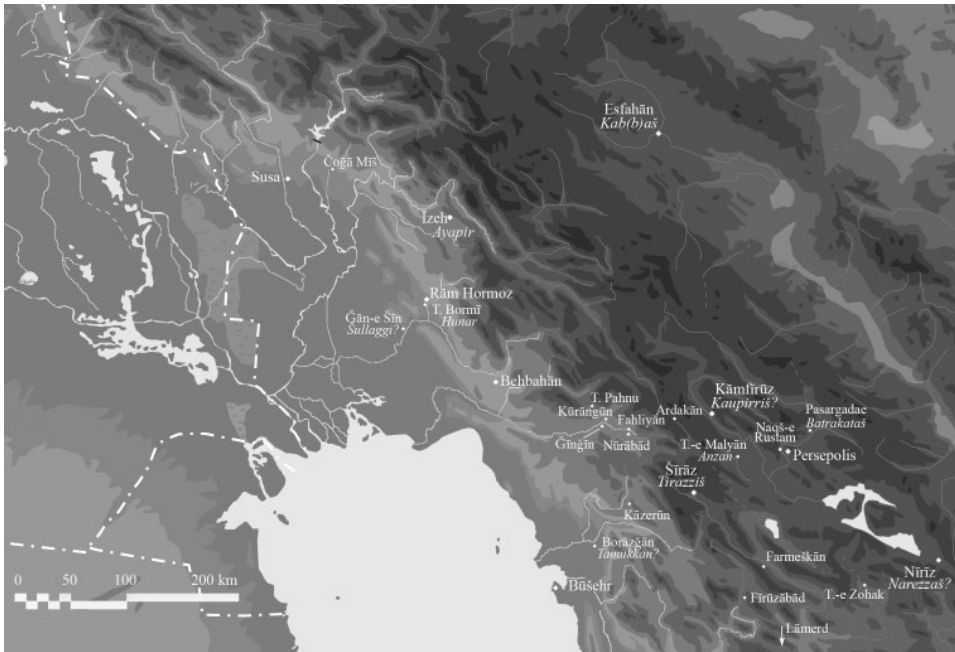


Figure 70.1 Map of southwestern Iran showing Achaemenid sites (Henkelman 2008a: p. 68 fig. 2.1.; reproduced by permission of Wouter F. M. Henkelman).

ground plan, something that makes assignment of specific functions to the various edifices extremely difficult. It is therefore hardly possible to decide whether this sector should be identified as a private or an administrative quarter. In any event the relief decoration of the buildings does not permit clear differentiation between the two parts of the terrace.

Outside the terrace further to the south there is a group of buildings whose ground-plans are similar to those on the terrace itself, albeit with a number of variations (Mousavi 2012: pp. 26–41). Stone foundations uncovered by A. Tadjvidi may attest to a wall that surrounded this ensemble, starting at the Unfinished Tomb in the south and running west before turning north. Mousavi has suggested (1992: pp. 217–218, but contrast Boucharlat 1997b: 222 n.9) that this putative enclosure and the ashlar terrace wall correspond to two of the three walls that encircle Persepolis in Diodorus 17.71.4–71.6. But this equation is problematic, both because Diodorus' third wall cannot be identified (cf. the discussion in Gondet 2011: pp. 151–153), and, particularly, because his description seems to have less to do with real architecture than with Herodotus' portrayal of Ecbatana (Hdt. 1.98).



Figure 70.2 Plan of Persepolis, adapted from Mark B. Garrison, *The Ritual Landscape at Persepolis – Glyptic Imagery from the Persepolis Fortification and Treasury Archives* (Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization 72), Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2017, Fig. 2.6.

Immediately south of the terrace A. Hakemi postulated a lake, both because this would provide an additional barrier to protect the terrace wall (which is comparatively low in this part) and because no structural remains were found immediately south of the terrace (Hakemi 1970). Of course, this is no more than a conclusion *e silentio*.

Babylon

The general situation in Babylon (Figure 70.3) was totally different from that in Persepolis. Here the only thing commonly counted as an architectural achievement of the Achaemenids is the so-called “Perserbau” (Figure 70.4) – a modest pavilion-like building from the time of Artaxerxes II,

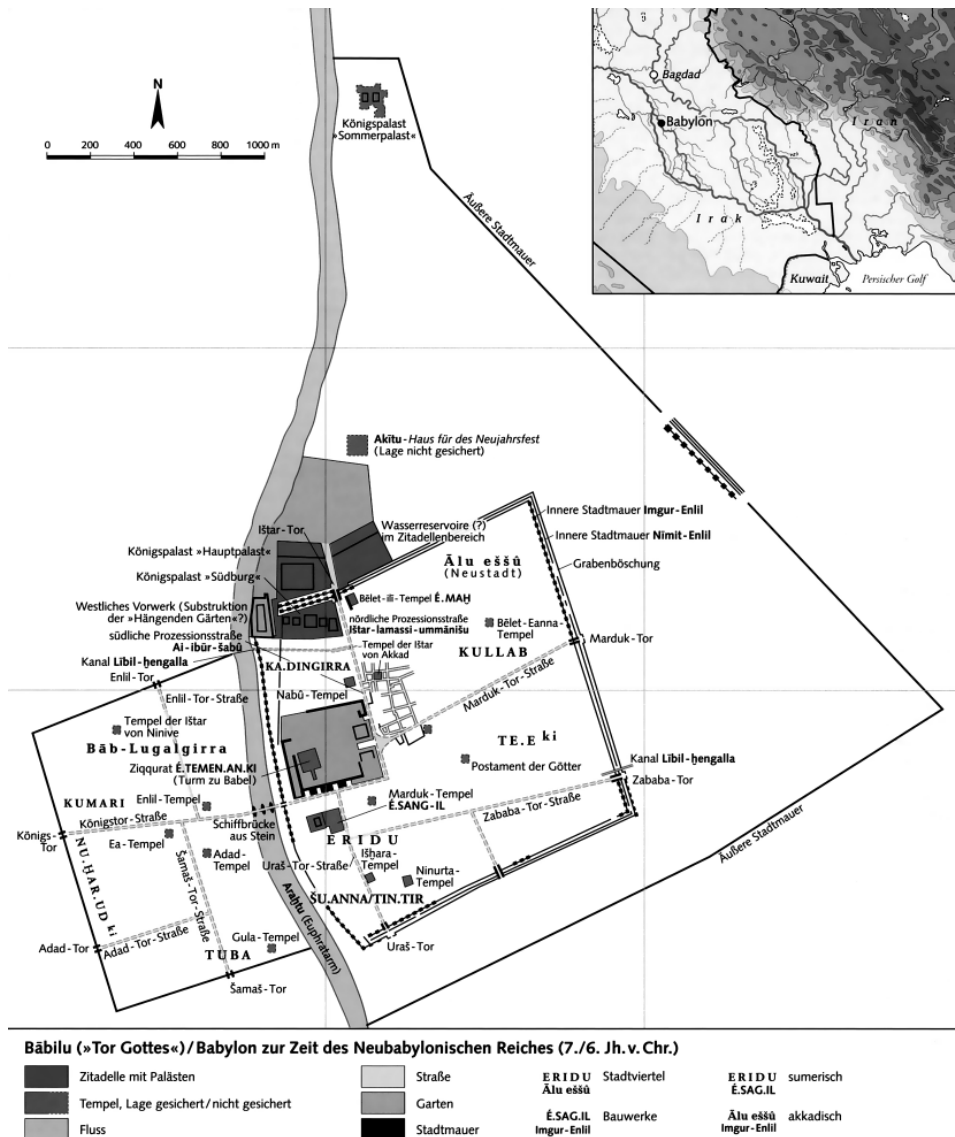


Figure 70.3 Map *Bābilu («Tor Gottes»)/Babylon zur Zeit des Neubabylonischen Reiches* (Wittke, A.-M., Olshausen, E. and Szydlak, R. (eds.), *Historischer Atlas der antiken Welt* (Der Neue Pauly – Supplement 3) Stuttgart, Weimar: Metzler, p. 57; reproduced by permission of Mirko Novák).

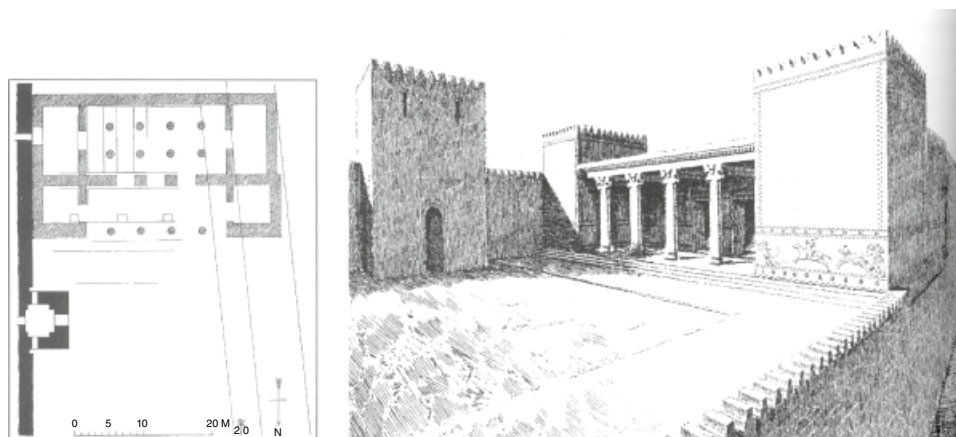


Figure 70.4 “Perserbau,” supplemented floor plan and restoration attempt by R. Koldewey (Koldewey 1931, Pl. 28).

with a portico at the front looking north and a rectangular hypostyle hall behind it, both symmetrically flanked by smaller rooms (Koldewey 1931, Pl. 28; Haerinck 1973).

Recently, however, attention has been drawn to the fact that the ground plans of the state rooms south of the “West-” and the “Anbauhof” of Babylon’s Southern Palace (Südburg) (Figure 17.1) are very similar to those south of the western court of the palace at Susa (Figure 15.5: C1). In both places Entrance Hall and Main Hall are subdivided by projecting pilasters into a main and two secondary rooms. The access to the Entrance Hall was not lockable and was considerably broader than the entrance into the Main Hall, which, being narrower, could be closed by a door. This arrangement, which can also be observed in the western courts of the Northern (Hauptburg) and the Summer Palaces in Babylon, is thought by H. Gasche to have derived from Iranian prototypes (Gasche 2010: pp. 450–453).

On the basis of this postulated typological dependence, as well as the slightly deviant character of the two western courts of the Southern Palace (Südburg) – by comparison with the three remaining ones – and the consistent 4.5 m difference in level between the “West-” and “Haupthof,” Gasche concludes that the two western parts are of Achaemenid date, the “Westhof” most likely going back to Cyrus or Cambyses, the “Anbauhof” to Darius I or Xerxes I (Gasche 2010; cf. Amiet 2010: pp. 4–7). In view of the length of time over which the Achaemenids ruled and visited the city it is, of course, tempting to suppose that they built more than just the tiny “Perserbau.” But the bricks used in the relevant area carry stamps of King Neriglissar, so would have to be supposed to have been recycled. Another piece of evidence that has

to be considered is a grave inserted into the northwest corner of house 47, which was part of the Westhof complex of the Southern Palace (Südburg). In the light of associated finds this tomb has been connected with Nabonidus (Moortgat-Correns 1996: pp. 163–175). If this is correct, the end of the Neo-Babylonian period provides a *terminus post quem non* for the Westhof complex and rules out dating it to the Achaemenid epoch.

The Surroundings of the Residences

At the same time Babylon is, in contrast to the other residences of the empire, the only place that can be termed *urban*, if variety of built environment is indeed a fundamental defining feature of a town or city (Kolb 1984: pp. 12–15): for in Babylon we have a townscape characterized by extensive fortifications, governmental and administrative buildings, sanctuaries in great numbers, residential quarters, and gardens.

The “empty cities” Pasargadae and Susa and the citadel of Persepolis, on the other hand, offer building complexes which, at least in terms of ground plan, offer only slight variations. Many elements that are actually indispensable for an ordinary urban settlement and *a fortiori* for a capital seem to be absent at these places (Jacobs 2003–2004: p. 447). Only in the case of Susa might this statement perhaps be qualified, inasmuch as the palace itself seems to have provided premises for quite a number of different types of use. Such at least is the view of D. Ladiray, who has interpreted individual sets of rooms within the palace variously as royal reception rooms reserved for official events, living accommodation for princes and other family members, and chancellery offices (Ladiray 2010: pp. 208–221). On the other hand, the question of where the king and his family lived during a visit to Persepolis is one that is not answered simply by looking at the terrace: further argument is necessary. For example, P. Amiet and D. Huff have suggested that there could have been plenty of space for living quarters between the southern towers of the so-called *apadāna* on a story above the magazines (Amiet 1994: p. 3; Huff 2010: pp. 312–319 Fig. 2–3). If one postulated two upper floors, that alone would add up to more than 1000 m² of living space. Similarly Huff has conjectured that between the ends of the southern and northern porticoes protruding beyond the central hall of palace P at Pasargadae (Figures 15.1 and 15.2) there were once mud-brick structures that provided living quarters and, in the form of galleries, actually extended into the central hall (Huff 2010: pp. 337–347 Fig. 16–17). In view of this A. Invernizzi’s proposition that seemingly rather uniform architecture might have been adapted to numerous different uses – although coined in relation to another epoch – may apply here as well (Invernizzi 2013). M.C. Root’s discussion of the modern definition of a “temple” and its relation to the

function of various types of Achaemenid architecture points in the same direction (Root 2010). In each case one is warned against evaluating the possible uses of this sort of architecture in too restrictive a fashion.

But, even so, the built environment at Pasargadae or Susa hardly looks sufficient to cope with the requirements of a residence, not to mention a “capital,” for it certainly lacks the thing that brings a city to life in the first place: somewhere for the inhabitants to live.

Neither at Pasargadae nor at Susa or Persepolis has anything of the sort been identified in the vicinity of the Residence buildings. At Pasargadae the structures in the vicinity of Takht-e Soleiman can hardly be interpreted in this way (Benech et al. 2012: pp. 20–26, 30–32). At Persepolis the implications of Sumner’s systematic survey in the wider area around the royal terrace (Sumner 1972; Sumner 1986; cf. Tilia 1978: pp. 71–91) remain debatable. The start and end of relevant levels in the sites he reported in the Marvdasht stand in an uncertain relationship with the Achaemenid era, and wherever the vaguely dated Late Plain Ware is absent (on problems of dating Late Plain Ware cf. Gondet 2011: pp. 117–123) the alleged settlement site in question may consist solely of displaced building elements, as R. Boucharlat has explained (Boucharlat 2003a: pp. 263–264). Boucharlat’s reasoning leads to the conclusion that, although Sumner believed he had identified up to 42 relevant sites, this figure should perhaps be considerably reduced, and that the same applies to population estimates based on the 42 sites. Firuzi, a 600 ha site 4 km distant from Persepolis, does remain significant: it is probably to be identified with *Matezziš*, a place mentioned in the Persepolis Fortification Archive (see below), and it was a center with (we should suppose) a considerable population (Boucharlat 2003a; cf. now also Hartnell 2010). But, even so, the area between the terrace and this and other settlements was largely an empty zone (for a summary, see Boucharlat et al. 2012; but cf. now Gondet et al. 2018).

The same seems to have been the case at Susa as well, where settlement around the site was comparably sparse. Perhaps, as suggested again by Boucharlat, these zones were deliberately emptied in early Achaemenid times to serve military and agricultural requirements (Boucharlat 2003a: pp. 264–265).

Function

Discussion of the function of the residences can start from various perspectives. One is provided by texts found at the sites: this applies particularly to Persepolis but also to Susa. Another is offered by the archeological record of architecture, architectural sculpture, and other finds. A third way is opened up by classical sources.

Primary Sources

Achaemenid inscriptions are found at all of the five residences named at the outset and almost nowhere else in the empire. At Persepolis they refer to a terrace and a fortification (DPf) and to various other buildings, namely gates and palaces. In an inscription found at Susa (DSe §5) Darius also speaks of a fortification. Whether this relates to the fortification that may have encircled the Acropolis hill (see above) or to the c. 15 m high glacis that embraced *Tell de l'Apadana* and the *Ville Royale* and Acropolis tells (Boucharlat 1997a: p. 57; Boucharlat 2001: p. 118) can hardly be determined. DSa, DSz and DSaa (Kuhrt 2007: pp. 492–497) speak at length about the construction of a palace; and it is to a palace (*apadāna*; on the set of problems connected with this term cf. Henkelman 2012: pp. 951–952) that an inscription of Artaxerxes II on a column base found at Ecbatana may refer (A₂Hb).

The archives found at Persepolis and Susa show that they were administrative centers. The Elamite tablets from Persepolis provide information about *inter alia* the provisioning of travelers, the disbursement of resources for sacrifices, and the payment of workers. The records relating to travel provisions in particular allow us to define the area for which Persepolis acted as the regional administrative headquarters (Henkelman 2008a: pp. 110–123, 2011: pp. 92–93; 2012: pp. 949–950).

Also very complex information can be gleaned from the numerous archives, especially economic ones, preserved in Babylonia. C. Waerzeggers has demonstrated that Babylonian businessmen regularly traveled to Susa on tax-related business (Waerzeggers 2010), and this seems to make it clear that, at least as a fiscal center, Susa was more important than Babylon.

The Archeological Record

So far as the archeological record is concerned, interpretation is impeded (except in the case of the palace buildings at Susa and Babylon) by the above-mentioned uniformity of the built environment. Anything that is out of the ordinary has therefore been adduced by scholars in an attempt to clarify the function of the places in question.

So, for example, people have tried to exploit the fact that the sites in Persis are connected with royal burial places – the grave of Cyrus at Pasargadae (Stronach 1978: pp. 24–43), and Tombs V and VI and the Unfinished Tomb at Persepolis (Calmeyer 2009; Calmeyer and Kleiss 1975). The fact that tombs only appear at Persepolis from the fourth century onwards has prompted the idea of a change of function, one that made Persepolis “the scene for certain religious ceremonies” (Tilia 1972: p. 208). The singular amount of relief decoration at Persepolis, especially the representations of processions that long

remained without parallel, prompted speculation about its function as the *locus* of a New Year festival (see the short overview in Amandry 1987: pp. 164–166 with n. 8). The Zendan-e Zoleiman and Sacred Enclosure featured in discussion of the function of Pasargadae (Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1983) – the former especially in connection with claims that Pasargadae was where Persian kings underwent a coronation ritual.

But architectural decoration, stone-carved reliefs, pictures on glazed bricks, wall paintings, and statuary cannot provide decisive indications of the function of residence sites. That is already clear from the fact that Persepolis is the only one that provides enough material to make one confident that one at least has a representative picture. From Ecbatana there is no evidence of any kind. The glazed bricks from Babylon have so far provided only depictions of soldiers (Nunn 1988: pp. 198–199). From Susa we do have – as from Persepolis – soldiers, servants bringing dishes and natural produce, and (since the discovery of fragments of wall paintings in the palace at the Šāhūr: Labrousse and Boucharlat 1972: p. 83 Fig. 42; Boucharlat 2010: pp. 402–403 Fig. 466–469) gift-bearing delegations from the provinces of the empire. Admittedly, the striding bulls and lion-griffins well-known from Susa (Nunn 1988: pp. 194–198; Daucé 2010: pp. 337–340 Fig. 368–369) lack parallels in Persepolis, and, conversely, some important features of Persepolitan iconography (audience scene, the king held aloft by throne bearers, Royal Heroes fighting wild beasts and composite creatures) are so far absent at Susa. But these differences are not sufficient to justify the conclusion that Persepolis and Susa had different functions, especially when one considers that the most complex subject, the gift-bearing provincial delegations, is attested at both places (on this subject cf. Jacobs 2002: pp. 357–368).

Classical Lore

Generally speaking classical sources provide the most substantial and explicit information about the function of residences. That said, it should be noted at the outset that pre-Alexander authors seem not to mention Persepolis – or, at least, that there is no positive proof that they did so. In view of recent research it is no longer surprising that Ctesias does not mention Persepolis (cf. Mousavi 2012: p. 51); he may have been at Persepolis as little as he was at Babylon, but even if he had seen Persepolis, this need not have had any impact on his historical narrative (cf. Jacobs 2011). In the end, the general failure to refer to the place simply shows that Persepolis was not a focal point for Greeks in the sixth to fourth centuries BCE. It is, of course, unthinkable that the place was actually entirely unknown. All satraps of Lydia – and certainly some members of their staff as well – knew about Persepolis, because they were all princes of the Achaemenid House or descendants of the families privileged by Darius I

after his victory over Gaumāta (Jacobs 1994: p. 103 n. 61). And the knowledge about Persepolis imputed to Alexander the Great when he marched into Persis must already have been available before, even if (once again) it is reported by a more recent source (Curt. 4.5.8; cf. Arr., Anab. 3.18.10).

All descriptions of Achaemenid cities that have come down to us are of post-Achaemenid date and offer a remarkably uniform picture. When speaking of Persepolis Diodorus (17.70.1–70.2; 71.1.3–1.8) mentions a fortress (ἄκρᾱ), a triple ring of crenelated walls, gateways in each side with bronze doors and adjacent 20-cubit bronze door-jambs, palaces, private houses, and treasuries. Only the reference to the royal tombs and to the residences of kings and generals at the foot of the terrace allows one to postulate some more or less direct familiarity with the place.

A comparison with Strabo's portrayal of Susa (15.3.2) demonstrates that the descriptions are largely *topos*-driven: a city wall and a fortress (ἀκρόπολις), a palace, and sanctuaries are said to have existed there. It is true that a certain Polycleitus is quoted as challenging the claim that Susa had a city wall, but Strabo rounds off the stereotype picture in 15.3.21 with a further reference to a fortress (ἄκρᾱ) – one in which every king had erected a palace and a treasury³. In Polybius' description (10.27.5–27.10) Ecbatana also lacks a city wall, but possesses a fortress (ἄκρᾱ). Beneath it lies a palace of extreme splendor with columns covered in gold and bricks made of silver, i.e. a building which is virtually a treasury in itself.

One can hardly draw on these physical descriptions to discover the appearance of the cities in question, and certainly not to learn about their function. By comparison, the assertion that Susa had been the royal headquarters (Strabo 15.3.2: βασιλειον τῆς ἡγεμονίας; cf. Pausanias 3.9.5) looks more constructive, and the evidence of fifth-century authors seems to point in the same direction: Aeschylus (Pers. 644) calls Darius a native of Susa (Σουσιγενής), and a message about the defeat at Salamis was sent there (cf. Timoth., Pers. 159). The royal road described by Herodotus ended at Susa (Hdt. 5.52–54), and it is hardly by chance that Herodotus names Susa also as the place where the Great King lived, treasuries were to be found (Hdt. 5.49; cf. 3.30, 64, 140; 5.24, 30; 7.3; 9.108), and campaigns had their starting point (Hdt. 4.83, 85; cf. 1.88). For later authors, by contrast, for example Aristophanes and Xenophon, Ecbatana and Babylon seem to play a leading role (Seibert 2003–2004: pp. 34–38; cf. the arguments of Briant 2010: p. 32).

After its conquest by Alexander Persepolis is frequently termed *capital*: so Curtius Rufus calls it (4.5.8) *caput regni*, Diodorus (17.70.1) μητρόπολιν ... τῆς Περσῶν βασιλείας and Trogus (in Justinus 11.14.10) *caput Persici regni*.

Asking texts from the fourth century BCE and later about which of the major residences was the most important and could be designated as *the*

“capital” in a modern sense (on problems connected with this term see Seibert 2003–2004: pp. 29–30) is probably to force on them an illegitimate question, because one may suspect that all such sources already knew about the king’s periodical “change of residence,” something reported first by Xenophon.

According to Xenophon, the king annually spent seven winter months in Babylon, three spring months at Susa and two summer months at Ecbatana (Xen. Cyr 8.6.22). Among the other sources that are relevant in this context (for this see Tuplin 1998: pp. 64–67) people have relied particularly on Athenaeus 12.513f, who reports that the Persian king spent winter at Susa, spring in Babylon, summer at Ecbatana, and fall at Persepolis, probably because division of the year into four quarters of about equal length seems more sensible than Xenophon’s scheme of 10 winter/spring months as against only two summer ones. In any event, the tradition suggests an annually reiterated cyclic activity dependent on the change of seasons, although the details of this putative procedure have to be (re)constructed from sources that describe it with considerable divergences (Tuplin 1998: pp. 64–67, 75–77, 86–87; cf. Seibert 2003–2004: pp. 42–43), and there are hints that the cycle was broken repeatedly, especially by longer sojourns at Susa (Tuplin 1998: pp. 86–87).

Tuplin and especially Boucharlat have also pointed out that the relevant authors when adding up the months did not take account of traveling time, which must have amounted to at least two, if not three, months a year (Boucharlat 1997b: pp. 217–219; Tuplin 1998: p. 71; Seibert 2003–2004: p. 56). Boucharlat stresses in addition that there must have been detours and that campaigns of conquest and military expeditions against separatist movements and to suppress rebellions will also have compromised the regularity of the system. Royal journeys that made the king’s presence palpable not only in the – in relation to the whole empire – comparably small area between the named places, but between the Mediterranean and the Indus and between Egypt and the Eurasian steppes, would have interrupted the cycle perhaps for a year or more (cf. Giovinazzo 1994). Moreover G. Tolini has noted the existence of other residences which perhaps attracted the king sporadically (Tolini 2011: p. 73).

Xenophon’s itemization of Cyrus’ supposed moves between Babylon, Susa, and Ecbatana, is, as shown above, hardly convincing. And this is not only a matter of the dates: there is also the question of whether Susa was at that time already suitable for a longer sojourn. One may suspect, therefore, that Xenophon is only trying to make acceptable behavior by his hero that would normally have been considered an indication of effeminacy. This is not the only case in which – with a more or less convincing justification – he allows something to Cyrus that would otherwise have been branded as the contemptible conduct of his mollycoddled Persian contemporaries. Thus, although he normally regards ostentatious clothing as an indication of τρυφή,

he allows his hero to wear “Median” clothing and even to use make-up on his face, arguing that one has to adapt one’s appearance to the position of power one has achieved (Xen. Cyr 8.1.40–41; 3.1–3.5) and thus ensuring that Cyrus remains above all suspicion of effeminacy. The case here is analogous. In *Cyropedia*, Xenophon links his hero’s seasonal move with climatic considerations but does so in a way that does not question his masculinity. In *Agesilaus*, by contrast, he reports that the Persian king flees heat and cold and denounces this without reserve as unmanly behavior (Xen. Ag. 9.5). In later times the search for eternal spring becomes a concession that Persian kings have to make to their effete constitution. All in all, the only chronological rule we can extract from the sources (except for Strab. 11.13.5) is that Babylon and Susa were chosen as winter residences and places on the plateau as summer ones. Consequently the court continuously took flight from climatic extremes, in a system that presupposed a “European” succession of spring, summer, fall, and winter – even though fall is not a meaningful climatic concept in Fārs, where the kings supposedly spent that season, and the same is said to be true for springtime in Susa or Babylon (Tuplin 1998: p. 68).

Similar things are said about the Parthians; their kings too are supposed to have switched periodically from residence to residence (Athen. 12.513f–514a; Jos., AJ 18.377; Strab. 11.13.1; 16.1.16; Curt. 5.8.1; cf. Jacobs 2010: pp. 87–88; see also S.H.A. 5.7.1–3 on Lucius Verus).

That there was a seasonally-determined cycle of movement from place to place is agreed by all the sources. But the data about the order in which places were visited and about the season and length of each sojourn are quite inconsistent. When one takes into account the transferability of the pattern to other contexts, it becomes clear that what we are dealing with fulfills all the criteria of a *topos*. But, even if we ignore this, it remains the case that there is no consistency in what is said about relocation and that the motivation imputed to the procedure *ex post facto* is untenable. It is therefore doubtful that the relevant sources have any evidential value at all. The only element that need not be repudiated is that the king and the royal suite traveled – something that is documented by other sources. It may also be the case that there were certain places to which the king came from time to time or even with some degree of regularity, e.g. Susa to deal with tax issues (Waezegggers 2010) or Fārs to take part in the *šip* feast or other events of a similar sort (Henkelman 2011). But, as far as we can judge, the king’s movements were generally dictated by political necessity or strategy (e.g. military campaigns or the wish to make his presence felt in the empire), and the climate will only exceptionally have played a role in the matter.

That being so, the entourage that accompanied the ruler may have varied in size quite considerably from occasion to occasion. When the whole court moved this was announced in advance and planned in detail, not least to ensure accommodation and provisions for the large number of people involved.

There is no doubt that on their travels the kings visited the most important and ideologically significant places – the places which they endowed with buildings and sculptures. But we cannot assume that even the six long-term rulers from Darius I onwards actually visited all of them at least once.

The Residences in the Imperial Capitals – Conclusion

How should one assess the relative importance of the various residences? Susa was clearly the political and financial center of the empire, as Briant rightly observed (Briant 2010: pp. 28–29). Pasargadae and Persepolis stand out both because of their position in Fārs and because of association with Cyrus (Pasargadae) or sumptuous endowment and proximity to the tombs of the dynasty (Persepolis). Even if one is inclined to follow C. Binder in doubting Pasargadae's function as the place of coronation of the Achaemenid kings (Binder 2010), the fact remains that the grave of Cyrus was held in honor and Pasargadae retained its importance until the invasion of Alexander (Strab. 15.3.7–3.8; Arr. Anab. 6.29.4–29.11). Although classical sources provide rather stereotyped descriptions, the individual sites were rather varied in character – the garden-city Pasargadae, the fortress Persepolis, the metropolis Babylon – and this seems to suggest that they served different functions.

Difference in purpose and ideological background is perhaps the best explanation of the fact that Darius I started building programs at Susa and Persepolis at much the same time. The inscription DSaa, whose list of countries is still nearly identical with that of the Bisotun inscription and whose substantive text lists materials for building the palace, proves that building at Susa began early in Darius' reign.⁴ But the completion of the huge terrace-substructure by 512 at the latest (Jacobs 1997: pp. 284–288; on the character of DPd-g as a foundation record Schmitt 2000: p. 56) and the ensuing building history demonstrate that Persepolis was not started significantly later than Susa, as used to be claimed. There are indications in the iconography of the so-called *apadāna* at Persepolis that adornment of the building's podium with the procession of delegations had already been planned before 512, but was then modified because of new conquests in Africa and Europe (Jacobs 1997: esp. pp. 287–291). The closing of the foundation deposits of the *apadāna* occurred before the end of the sixth century (Jacobs 1997: pp. 293–264; cf. Vargyas 2000: esp. p. 42). Consideration of the reasons for the removal of the so-called Treasury reliefs from the middle of the *apadana* stairways and for the associated decision not to depict the heir apparent (Jacobs 1997: pp. 295–296)

make an early date for the Tripylon probable as well. So our mental picture of the vast terrace in the time of Darius I should be more lively than has commonly been the case. The administration that operated on the terrace from 509 BCE at the latest was not working in a sluggishly developing construction site but (after about 500 BCE) in an environment whose monumental center, the *apadāna*, was in usable condition and one which also contained the palace of Darius, the Treasury, and the Tripylon. Entrances from the northwest (the big flight of steps was also already in existence: Jacobs 1997: p. 298; Jacobs 2003–2004: p. 446; undecided Tilia 1978: pp. 23–25 Fig. 4, and Root 2010: p. 193), north (Mousavi 2012: pp. 11–13), and south (Tilia 1972: pp. 11–16) made the terrace accessible.

Even if the large number of buildings at Susa and Persepolis attests the higher status of these places compared with Babylon and Ecbatana, in the end a personal preference for certain places may, as in earlier times in Assyria, have been decisive in determining the site of a particular king's building activity. Whereas Xerxes I and Artaxerxes I concentrated mainly on Persepolis, Darius II and Artaxerxes II showed a stronger engagement with Susa. During his long reign the last named also started building projects in Babylon and Ecbatana. Artaxerxes III turned back to Persepolis.

As has already been observed, it remains difficult to evaluate all this activity from the point of view of the function of the buildings in question. Moreover, we continue to be confronted, especially at Pasargadae and Susa, with the phenomenon of the *empty cities*. So the idea of camping grounds for army, court, and administration – tent cities that arose wherever the king took up residence – certainly cannot be brushed aside. At Susa the c. 10–12 ha “Place d’armes” between the three tells has been thought suitable for an army and the large open space on the “Ville Royale” for the rest of the entourage. At Pasargadae the whole area defined by the widely-spaced buildings was in principle available (Boucharlat 1997b: pp. 220–223; Boucharlat 2006: p. 450). At Persepolis the plain in front of the terrace would have been suitable for the erection of a tent city.

As to the size of the tent or barrack city erected on each occasion, one should not perhaps develop too monstrous or romantic a conception of the governmental or administrative work that was carried out therein. If we imagine a well-organized administrative hierarchy, the number of threads that had to run together in the hands of the king decreases significantly, and the “capitale itinérante” (cf. Briant 1988, esp. pp. 267–269) becomes more manageable. At the same time one should not suppose that the king had to make many economies when he was not occupying one of his palaces: this is clear from Plutarch's description of the tent of Darius III (Plut. Alex. 20.12–20.13), the luxury of which would not easily be excelled even by a palace building.

Other Residences

Once we have dismissed the idea of an annual round trip to the imperial capitals, their relationship one to another becomes much less clear than it previously seemed. At the same time attention is naturally directed to other places at which written sources locate royal residences or archeological records suggest they were once to be found. A number of examples will be given in what follows, without any claim to completeness.

To begin with there are several places in Fārs that may be identified as royal residences. Among these are the complexes of Bardak-e Sīāh in the Dašt-e Sān region in the northern part of Bušehr province (<http://www.tavoosonline.com/News/NewsDetailEn.aspx?src=16503>) and Hakavan Tappeh, south of Šīrāz (Razmjou 2005): both provide, even if only to a limited extent, architectural decoration with sculptures in Achaemenid court-style, something that seems to have been a prerogative of the king.

That Dašt-e Gohar might have been the residence of Cambyzes has been suggested by typological considerations, viz. the intermediary position of the building's ground plan between Palace P at Pasargadae and the columned halls at Susa and Persepolis (Tilia 1974: pp. 200–202; Kleiss 1980). Typological considerations also led to the ascription of the incomplete tomb at Takht-e Rostam (Figure 70.5) to Cambyzes (Kleiss 1971). But, as his grave seems actually to have been situated near Narezzaš/Nīrīz (Henkelman 2003), both buildings have more recently been connected with Hystaspes, the father of Darius (Bessac and Boucharlat 2010: pp. 30–36).

Next one should mention a postulated building complex near Qaleh Kalī/Ġīngūn. The considerable size of the architectural elements from a portico excavated some time ago and the quality of the newly-found glass and stone tableware invite the suggestion that the king stayed there (Potts et al. 2007; Potts et al. 2009) – although here and in other cases it is hard to decide whether we are dealing with a royal way-station or a residence suitable for longer visits.

It is certain, by contrast, that Humadešu (named in Babylonian sources and apparently identical with OP *Uvādaucaya* and Elamite *Matezziš*, Zadok 1976; Vallat 1993: pp. 178–179) was used as a residence from the time of Cambyzes onwards. But its location is disputed (Zadok 1976: p. 76: not more than 50 km east of Susa; cf. Stolper 1984: pp. 306–307: near Persepolis) and it cannot for the moment be linked with an archeological site (but see Gondet 2011: pp. 138–140, 405–408). At Matannan there was another residence, erected by Cambyzes and later (it is conjectured) used by queen Irtašduna. The sources only permit an approximate location between Persepolis and Kaupirriš/Kāmfrīz farther to the northwest (Henkelman and Kleber 2007: esp. pp. 168–169) and once again there is no archeological site.



Figure 70.5 Takht-e Rostam bei Persepolis. Source: Photo B. Jacobs.

The alignment of written and archeological evidence is also difficult in the case of the royal residence that Elamite documents from Persepolis place at one of the two locations called Tamukkan (Vallat 1993: p. 273). This ought to be connected with a place called Taḥ(u)makka (Cyr. 29,131; YOS 3,10) or Taḥ-ú-ka^{ki} (BM 32619) in Late-Babylonian sources from the time of Cyrus where we hear about work on a royal building project, and, if so, the residence in question must have originated in the time of Cyrus (Henkelman 2008b: p. 305; Tolini 2008). As Henkelman has demonstrated, Tamukkan is probably the same as Taoke, which Greek sources put near the coast (Strab. 15.3.3; Arr., Ind. 39.1–39.3; cf. Ptol., Geogr. 6.4.2, 7 and its localization by Hunger and Ziegler 2002: pp. 64–66 Fig. 18, based on Ptolemy’s indication), and it might be archeologically represented by one of a number of sites: Borāzġān, Sang-e Sīāh, the above-mentioned Bardak-e Sīāh, and Kākh-e Čarkhāb (Henkelman 2008b: pp. 304–306 with n. 12; for these sites see now the comprehensive overview in Zehbari 2020).

Henkelman has also identified Kabaš, a place named on several tablets (Vallat 1993: p. 121) and said to have had a *paradeisos* (PF 0157), with Gabae, which, according to Strab. 15.3.3, was the site of a royal residence (Henkelman 2008b: pp. 310–311).

Classical sources document many other residences. Curtius Rufus (7.2.22–2.23) speaks in general terms of royal palaces with *paradeisoi* in Media (on the combination of *paradeisoi* and buildings see Tuplin 1996: pp. 107–108). Strabo (16.1.4) refers to a *basileion* of Darius I at Sadrae in Arbelitis. Xerxes

is said to have built one of the two palaces at Phrygian Celaenae after his retreat from Greece (cf. Tuplin 2011, esp. pp. 84–87). The other one, associated with a hunting ground, was sometimes used by the Lydian satrap Cyrus (Xen. Anab. 1.2.7), who, however, had his proper residence at Sardis, where it was again associated with a *paradeisos* (Xen. Oec. 4.20–4.23). The example of Celaenae with its two *basileiai* prompts one to wonder whether satrapal palaces at other, less sumptuously furnished places, were at the Great King's disposal, should he visit the relevant province. Counting satrapal establishments of this kind will significantly increase the number of attested residences. Two are mentioned by Xenophon in Armenia, one in its eastern part, south of the Centrites/Botan Çayı (Xen. Anab. 4.4.1), the other in the western part, 15 parasangs from the Teleboas/Karasu (Xen. Anab. 4.4.7). The same author also refers to a palace with *paradeisos* at the springs of the Dardas owned by the Syrian satrap Belesys (= Nahr ed Dahab in Lebanon?) (Xen. Anab. 1.4.10) and a château of Pharnabazus at Dascylium (Xen. Hell. 4.1.15–1.16; Kaptan 2010). Whether the palace complex at Kachetian Gumbati and the seemingly comparable buildings at various other places in the Caucasus region (Knauss 2005; see Chapter 22 Caucasus Region) can serve to give us an idea of the appearance of complexes that are documented only by written sources is a question that cannot for the moment be answered.

Residences will have been no less thick on the ground in the eastern part of the empire, and as an example one may adduce the extensive but only partly excavated site of Dahan-e Gholāmān (Boucharlat 2005: pp. 268–269; Genito 2012), which may represent the headquarters of the satrap of Drangiana. Another possible example is Pura, called the royal residence (τὰ βασιλεια) of Gedrosia by Arrian (6.24.1). A further residence, again mentioned by Arrian (3.30.6), was situated in Sogdian Maracanda, where Curtius Rufus (7.6.10) also speaks of a fortress (*arx*) within the city. But corresponding archeological evidence is as lacking here as at Bactra, Arachoti, and other centers of the eastern half of the Achaemenid Empire (cf. Francfort 2005: esp. pp. 328–334; see Chapter 23 The Empire's Northeast).

NOTES

- 1 The suggestion of Root (2010: pp. 202–204), that the gold- and silver tablets bearing the inscription DHa are counterparts of those found in the *apadāna* at Persepolis and actually come from there, has been challenged by Mousavi (2012: pp. 43–44 n. 121), who points especially to the diverging dimensions of the tablets from Persepolis. On the remaining tablets from Hamadan and the question of authenticity cf. Schmitt (1999): pp. 63–69, 88–91.

- 2 Tavernier (2004: pp. 22–29) raised the possibility of identifying the Elamite king Atta-hamiti-Inšušinak with Aθamaita, the opponent of Darius I, known from the Bisotun monument. But it seems problematic for various reasons that Susa only fell to the Persian empire in about 520 BCE Vallat (2006) has also objected to the identification.
- 3 This passage in particular makes me doubt that behind references to treasuries lies knowledge about craft centers controlled by the administration (cf. see Chapter 62 Persia). Rather the “treasuries” symbolized the wealth of the Persians and may have evoked an idea of buildings of the sort that adorned the Holy Road at Delphi.
- 4 That the inscription was not actually buried in a wall foundation until about a decade later is of no significance in this context.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author is very grateful to Christopher Tuplin for his assistance with the English version of this chapter.

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CHAPTER 71

The Court

Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones

Around 1200 CE, Walter Map, a Welsh cleric at the court of Henry II, tried to articulate his definition of “court” in a satirical work *De Nugis Curialium* (“Of Courtier Trifles”), but failed – ultimately stating that, “In the court I exist and of the court I speak but what the court is, God knows. I know not.” Map was aggrieved by his contemporaries’ inconsistency in referring to the court as a location, an institution, a group of people, an event, and a space of myth and legend. Courtiers in successive eras have tried to articulate the institution that created and defined them, but none has done it with such sublime irony and sheer exasperation as Walter Map. His is a fitting start to this short and selective exploration of the Achaemenid court because, in spite of recent sophisticated scholarly advances in the field (Spawforth 2007; Jacobs and Rollinger 2010; Lanfranchi and Rollinger 2010; Duindam et al. 2011), we still share Walter Map’s frustration at the difficulty of defining what precisely a “court” is.

Part of the difficulty in understanding the construction, functioning, and ideology of the Achaemenid court lies with the sources: Iranian and other Near Eastern iconographic materials, bureaucratic texts, and archeological remains provide only piecemeal evidence for court structure, while Greek and Hebrew texts are as fulsome in their vivid descriptions of the court as they are judgmental or fantastical. Accessing the Achaemenid court is fraught with difficulties.

It is logical to turn to comparative court studies for models, and of fundamental importance for thinking about the Achaemenid court has been Norbert

Elias' *Die höfische Gesellschaft* (1969), published in English in 1983 as *The Court Society*. More of a Weber-inspired sociologist than an historian, Elias articulated a model of court society which focused upon Bourbon French monarchy at Versailles. But should the Bourbon court (and other European examples) be regarded as apropos models for the Achaemenid court? The Christian courts of pre-industrial Europe never fully experienced the true weight of an absolute monarchy (like that of the Achaemenids) in the way that courts of the pre-modern Middle- and Far East experienced absolutism; better comparative models for the Achaemenid court might be found in the non-Christian dynastic courts of Moghul India, Safavid Iran, and Qing China, as well as (most importantly) in ancient Egyptian, Neo-Assyrian, Babylonian, and Hebrew courts. There can be no doubt that the pioneering work of Elias will continue to provide influential ways to examine the court societies of antiquity (Maria Brosius' 2007 study of the Persian court benefits from such an approach), but asking questions of eastern courts (of various periods) might expose better the nature of Achaemenid court ideologies, hierarchy, ceremonials and rituals, of royal hunts and feasts, of marriage practices, and gender roles.

What Was the Persian “Court”?

The Persian court, like other eastern courts, can be defined in four ways. The court was:

- a circle of elite people (“courtiers”) and servants in orbit around a monarch (see Chapter 72 King – Elites and Subjects – Slaves) on the Achaemenid Great King and his relationship with his courtiers; Briant 2002: pp. 302–354; Brosius 2007: pp. 30–40, 53–56).
- a larger environment of political, military, economic, and cultural structures which converged within the monarch's household; the court was the contact-point between the Great King and the ruling classes (satraps, local elites, and Persianized princelings) at regional and local levels of the empire (cf. Chapter 67 Taxes and Tributes; Henkelman 2010).
- the private rooms, the bureaucratic quarters, and the public halls and courtyards of the royal residences (see Chapter 70 The Residences), wherein the rituals of royalty were enacted and where the monarch received homage (threw banquets, see Chapter 73 Banquet and Gift Exchange), entertained, and relaxed. In the case of the Achaemenids it is especially important to remember that the court was not a single place per se – the court moved (see below).

- a setting of royal ceremonial and a place wherein a theatrical display of power was created and presented through audiences (see below), feasting, and even hunting (see Chapter 77 Hunting and Leisure Activities).

Historians of court societies tend to speak of an “outer court” – meaning the public areas of the residence (including throne rooms and banqueting halls) and people who were not tied to the service of the king on a regular basis – and an “inner court,” meaning the rooms occupied by the king on a more intimate basis (private dining rooms, bedchambers, bathrooms) and of the people who routinely worked within them as ministers of state and intimate body-servants. This concept of an “inner court” and an “outer court” is applicable to the Achaemenid royal household, and the Persian court can best be understood operating around these two axes, although the barriers which restricted access to the king were constantly being assaulted by courtiers who sought more intimate access to the monarch; for this not only meant the opportunity to importune a favor, but also implied to all onlookers that the privileged gainer of access had social eminence.

The people who naturally orbited within the Great King’s inner court were members of the royal harem (Llewellyn-Jones 2009, 2013), in other words those people who were under his immediate protection, including his mother, wives, concubines, children (including royal princes who could, upon their maturity, be sent into the provinces as satraps and commanders to set up their own courts-in-miniature), siblings, personal slaves, and nobles from the highest-ranking families of the realm, and those granted the honorific title “Friend” of the king (Briant 2002: pp. 308–310). The entire inner court was under the watch of a powerful official known as the **hazāra-patiš* (“master of a thousand”) or chiliarch (Keaveney 2010). He commanded the royal bodyguard and all court security and enjoyed the complete confidence of the ruler, controlling access to his personage through the protocol of the royal audience. A court official bearing the curious title of “King’s Eye” (Old Persian *Spasaka?*) – lampooned by Aristophanes in *Acharnians* (61–129) – was in charge of intelligence gathering and reported to the king (Hdt. 1.114; Ctes. FGh 688F 20 §12; Xen. Cyr. 8.2.10–12). Other prominent inner-court dignitaries included the steward of the royal household (perhaps **viθa-patiš*), the royal spear-carrier (**arštibāra*) and bow-bearer (**vačabāra*), and the royal charioteer, and cupbearer.

Bureaucrats, physicians, grooms, and translators constituted the make-up of the outer court, as did ambassadors and emissaries (called “secretaries” of the king). The Persepolis texts show that many of the servants at the Achaemenid court (bakers, cooks, wine stewards, and stable-hands) were recruited from peoples of the empire, as were physicians. Royal eunuchs, a kind of “third-sex,” were able to negotiate the permeable barriers of the two “courts” in

their crucial capacities as messengers, bureaucratic agents, royal advisers, and body-servants (Llewellyn-Jones 2002).

The people of the inner and outer courts constituted the royal *viθ* (Akkadian, *bītu*; Elamite *ulhi*) – the closest Old Persian equivalent of the complex ancient Greek term *oikos* – “house,” “dwelling,” “household,” “economic entity,” “people of a household” (Morgan 2010). When Darius I hoped that Ahuramazda would allow “happiness [to] rest upon this *viθ*” (DPe §3) he was alluding not only to the individuals who made up the royal household and those who came under his authority, but to the physical space which they occupied also: his hope was equally that, “happiness will rest upon this palace” (see Kuhrt 2007: p. 487, n. 4; in the Bisitun Inscription likewise, *viθ* is used in the sense of both “house” and “household”, see DB § 61–70). In Greek texts, individuals in the orbit of the Great King were termed “the people of (literally ‘around’) the court” (*hoi peri tōn aulōn*) or *aulikoi* (“courtiers”), although the word *aulē* (“court”) itself was rarely used as a synonym for “palace” or “residence” (*basileion* or *basileia* was used instead; e.g. Hdt. 1.30; alternatively, Ctes. FGrH 688 F9 §13 used *ta oikē mata*; see further comments in Brosius 2007: p. 25). The Romans usurped *aulē* (Latin, *aula*) and thus its meaning enters into modern European languages (“court,” “cour,” “Hof”).

Theater of Royalty: Court Ceremony and Etiquette

In any monarchic system ceremony naturally revolves around the figure of the ruler; ceremonies have always been the favorite way for a regime to exhibit its political clout, and when properly employed, ceremony nearly always produces the desired results by appealing to people of diverse backgrounds and beliefs. Alongside promoting a regime’s power and stability, ceremony serves to reveal its ideological basis and world-view to its targeted population. Therefore the study of Achaemenid court ceremony (as far as can be achieved) offers clues as to the dynasty’s self-definition.

Messages lie encoded in various components of the rituals of Achaemenid court ceremonial: the architectural venue for ceremonies or the route of imperial processions can offer significant clues about the meaning of ceremonies to the life and ideology of the dynasty. Similarly, depictions of thrones, footstools, parasols, fly-whisks, scepters, crowns, and robes are loaded with symbolic implications, although many of the subtleties of these objects of symbolic importance still require serious scholarly exploration. Moreover, the identity of courtiers participating in ceremony, their attire as well as their stance, imparts a mass of information about the self-perception of the ruling elite.

Achaemenid court ceremonies maintained and reinforced hierarchy within the elite and delineated power relations between courtiers, the royal family,

and the monarch himself. Persian monarchs relied upon formalized etiquette and court ceremony to create a special aura around the throne (Brosius 2007, 2010). A deliberate separation and distancing of the king from the gaze of his subjects, even from much of his court, meant that elaborate rituals were enacted through which courtiers and visitors might get limited access to the royal personage during a tightly controlled and stage-managed audience ceremony (Esther 1. 14 highlights the notion of having privileged access to the royal presence). Therefore we might think of the Great King, costumed in his finery, as an actor in a great royal drama (and his courtiers as part-players and spectators) because events at court, like coronations and investitures, royal audiences, and imperial parade-reviews, were clearly focused on a kind of “performance,” since they were set far apart from everyday life by being “scripted” or turned into ceremony (see Elias 1983: pp. 94, 97; Burke 1992; Strootman 2007: p. 10; Llewellyn-Jones 2015).

Narrative accounts of audiences with the Great King form a significant corpus in Greek and Biblical writings on the Persian court (Philostr. *Imag.* 2.31; Esther 5, 1–3; the same is true of satrapal audience scenes – see Xen. *Hell.* 1.5.1–3; Plut. *Lys.* 6; Allen 2005), but nothing remotely comparable exists in the Achaemenid literary tradition; instead we must turn to a rich stratum of iconography for information on the intricacies of the ceremony. Representations of the royal audience come in the form of numerous seal and gemstone images, a small painted image on a sarcophagus, and from the sculptured monumental door-jambs at Persepolis (see Allen 2005; Kaptan 2002: pp. 31–41), although the finest surviving examples come in the form of two big stone reliefs once located at the staircases to the Apadana (later moved to the Treasury; see Tilia 1972: pp. 173–240). The Great King is shown in audience in a “frozen moment” (Figures 55.1 and 71.1); he wears a court robe and crown and holds a lotus blossom and a scepter (which he might stretch out to grant favors; Esther 4.11, 5.2, 8.4); in order to “accentuate the immutable character of kingship” (Briant 2002: p. 221), he is accompanied by the Crown Prince who is depicted wearing the same garb as the king, and who is given the prerogative of holding a lotus too. Also in attendance are high-ranking members of the court and the military (Kuhrt 2007: p. 536). Two incense-burners help to demarcate the royal space (and accentuate its sacredness), as does the dais upon which the throne is placed (Brettler 1989: pp. 85–86) and the baldachin, decorated with an image of Ahuramazda, which covers the scene (the relief image closely echoes a Greek description: Dinon F1). The theatrical paraphernalia of the throne room, and the awesome setting of the Apadana was intended to instil fear and wonder in suppliants; the figure of the king, the protagonist of the drama, must have been an impressive, almost overwhelming, sight and the Greek version of *Esther* (15. 5–7) brilliantly captures the scene of the terrified queen approaching the enthroned king, who is described as looking “like a bull in the height of anger.”

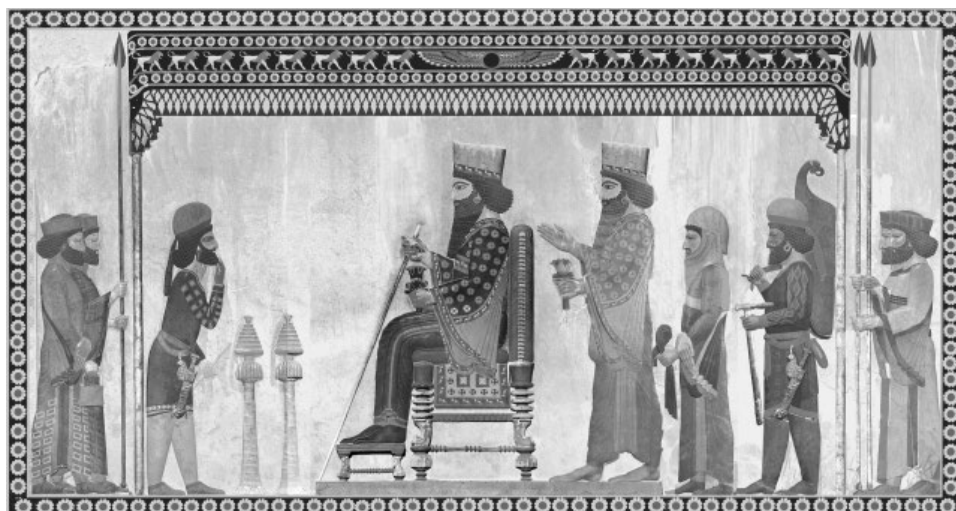


Figure 71.1 Recreation of the Treasury Relief, Persepolis. Source: Reproduced by permission of Persepolis 3d.com.

Interestingly, what appears to be a female audience is depicted on a cylinder seal from an unknown (but possibly Levantine) provenance (Brosius 1996: p. 86, 2010; Lerner 2010). The parallel with the king's audience is explicit and is proof of the high regard in which royal women – possibly in this instance the king's mother – were held. The high social rank of royal females, like that of the Great King himself, was stressed by their conspicuous invisibility (although this must not be confused with any kind of “Oriental seclusion”; Llewellyn-Jones 2009, 2013) and formal audiences only served to heighten their significance at court.

The monarch's royal throne was a significant icon of kingship (Salvesen 1998: p. 132; Brettler 1989: pp. 81–85; Charles-Gaffiot 2011): it was high-backed and rested upon leonine-feet (thrones frequently employed lion or sphinx imagery; 1 Kings 10, 18–20; Kuhrt 2007: p. 617). The Great King had a footstool too, an important emblem of kingship and one loaded with ritual – there was even a court office associated with it (Dinon FGrH 690 F25a), and a bearer of the royal footstool is depicted on the Apadana. Curtius Rufus' vignette of Alexander misappropriating a low table as a footstool (5.2.13–15) only reconfirms the centrality of this seemingly inconspicuous piece of furniture in royal display and ideology; after all, it was a given that the Great King's feet should never touch the ground, and must be protected by soft carpets (Dinon FGrH 690 F1).

At the center of the Treasury Relief a courtier dressed in a riding habit – possibly the chiliarch – performs a ritual gesture of obeisance to the monarch which, *prima facie*, is associated to the *sala'am*, or formal greeting, used in later Muslim courts. Formalized gestures were a hallmark of Persian social communication

(Hdt. 1.134) and the Achaemenids readily seem to have transformed the gestures of *la vie quotidienne* into a rarefied form of court etiquette.

Known to the Greeks as *proskynesis*, the exact nature of the ceremonial obeisance is debated (Frye 1972; Fredricksmeier 2000; Rollinger 2012), but when Herodotus says that one should perform *proskynesis* to a superior while prostrating oneself or bowing down, the term must describe an act performed once one is bowed or prostrate, which is, as on the Treasury Relief, kissing from the hands. In a Near Eastern context, the Persian reverential practice of bowing and kissing looks very much at home: kow-towing, prostration, kissing the ground, or even kissing the feet of the monarch were familiar gestures in Egyptian and Neo-Assyrian court protocol. But for the Greeks the gesture was a religious act and suitable only for performance before a god so that for a Greek to do it before a man undermined the Greek pride in *eleutheria* (Xen. Hell. 4.1.35). Classical authors note that performing *proskynesis* before the Great King was a non-negotiable rule for an audience (Nep. Con. 3.3; Ael. VH 1.21) and the misunderstanding of the Persian act of *proskynesis* as a veneration of divine monarchy accounts for several Greek tales which take the distaste for this act of social submission as their theme (Hdt. 7.136; Ael. VH 1.29; Plut. Artax. 22.8).

The Itinerant Court

Administrative documents from Persepolis attest to the systematic criss-crossing of vast swathes of the empire by the Great King and his court who traversed the realm not just for pragmatic reasons of state, but also to satisfy a deep-set instinct in the Persian psyche: for the Achaemenids were essentially nomads and a regular itinerant pattern of movement-settlement-movement can be located in the routine peripatetic practices of the court (Briant 1988). Changes in the seasons were an important factor in the court's movement, and the classical sources state that the king was constantly chasing an eternal spring-time and settling his court in parts of the empire which enjoyed the most hospitable weather conditions. A summation of the sources looks like this:

Time of year	Xenophon <i>Cyropaedia</i> 8.6.22	Plutarch <i>Moralia</i> 604C <i>Moralia</i> 78D	Dio Chrysostom <i>Discourses</i> 6. 1–7	Athenaeus 12.513f	Aelian <i>On Animals</i> 10.6
Spring	Susa	Susa	—	Babylon	—
Summer	Ecbatana	Media	Ecbatana	Ecbatana	Ecbatana
Autumn	—	—	—	Persepolis	—
Winter	Babylon	Babylon	Babylon Susa Bactra	Susa	Susa

The classical texts unanimously agree on a cool Median residency for the court during the summer months but beyond that it is impossible to work out the reality of the royal seasonal migration (Tuplin 1998: p. 72).

The best surviving description of the Achaemenid peripatetic court is preserved by the Roman historian Quintus Curtius Rufus (3.3.8–16, 20–27), who probably reiterates earlier Greek observations on the royal procession (Xen. Cyr. 8.3.15–20, 33–34). All accounts agree that the king traveled with his insignia of power – religious banners, fire altars, and an entourage of priests – and with a vast military force, treasury porters, and multitudes of servants and kinsmen. The presence of the courtiers *en masse* was *de rigor* and therefore the royal harem was transported, under guard, in covered wagons (*harmamaxai*) and on horseback (for comparative evidence of court progressions under the Moghuls see Eraly 2007: p. 55; Schimmel 2004: pp. 77–80; Lal 1988: pp. 60–67; Lal 2005; for court migration in China see Chang 2007 and Gabbiani 2009).

The logistics of the court shifting locations required enormous organization and colossal resources since many thousands of people would have been affected by, or responsible for, the move. Members of the royal family might travel independently of the king, taking with them their own courts-in-miniature and here too precision in planning would have been tantamount. For instance, Irdabama, the mother (?) of Darius I – and thus the highest-ranking female at court – was economically active and had the authority to issue commands to the administrative hierarchy at Persepolis. She is well attested in the Persepolis texts overseeing her vast personal estates, receiving and distributing food supplies, and commanding an entourage of *puhu* and *kurtaš*, she is verified at the ceremonial cities of Persepolis and Susa, and even at Borsippa in Babylonia (Brosius 1996: pp. 130–141; Henkelman 2010: pp. 693–697, 2011: p. 613 persuasively proposes Irdabama's identification as the mother of Darius). Irdabama traveled widely around central Iran and Mesopotamia with her own courtly entourage; moreover, her court is often attested traveling independently of the Great King. In this, the behavior of the king's mother shadows that of her son, who toured the countryside as an element of his royal duty (Briant 2002: p. 191), and as part of her personal progress through the empire's heartland Irdabama could deputize for the king in his absence (interestingly, European queens frequently traveled with their own court households – see Starkey 2008: pp. 39–58 – as did the highest-ranking women of the Mughal court – see Lal 2005). Like Irdabama, Darius' wife Irtaštuna (Artystone) can be located traveling around the Empire's core with her own small court retinue: she is sometimes mentioned traveling with Irdabama (PFa 14a), and sometimes journeying in the company of her son, Prince Aršama (PF 733).

When the imperial procession came to a halt a camp was set up. Tents were erected and a royal city of cloth, leather, and wood appeared (Xen. Cyr. 8.5.2–14). Herodotus (7.119) records that the Persian troops marching with Xerxes

had the task of dismantling, transporting, and reassembling the royal tent when they reached a new camp, and we should imagine that the tents of the other royals and nobles were erected by teams of servants at the same time. Systematically arranged to reflect hierarchical and defensive concerns, the royal camp was constructed with the Great King's tent at the center of the complex, facing toward the east and decorated with distinguishing devices (Curt. 3.8.7). Standing at the epicenter of the camp, the king's tent became the symbol of royal authority itself (Plut. Eum. 13), and inside the tent the king carried out the same rituals and duties that he followed inside palaces; in all respects, the king's tent was a collapsible version of a palace throne-hall, and it is reasonable to conceive of the Apadana at Persepolis as a stone version of the royal tent.

As a mark of favor and as a display of royal largesse, the Great King might gift a favored courtier with a splendid tent, often richly furnished with couches, textiles, gold plate, and slaves (Ath. 2.48e–f); some tents were even considered heirlooms (Xen. Cyr. 5.5.1–2). The tent was a visible emblem of imperial authority – so much so in fact, that the enemy capture of a royal tent and its rich accoutrements was a symbol of the collapse of monarchic authority itself (Plut. Alex. 20.11–13).

This chapter has, perforce, been selective with its focus and its material; the truth of the matter is, however, that the court influenced many of the key areas of Achaemenid culture. It was the epicenter of politics, bureaucracy and administration, the military, and perhaps even a religious center with rituals enacted around the person of the Great King; the court was the intellectual, artistic, and cultural center of the empire too, and artisans of all sorts flocked to court to receive patronage from the monarch (see Chapter 96 Poetry, Music, and Dance). The court was without doubt the hub for the creation of imperial royal ideology and the dissemination point for all forms of official Achaemenid dogma; the importance of the Great King's court is reflected by the fact that throughout the empire, satraps replicated its forms, structures, customs, and ceremonies as the most effective symbol of royal authority.

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CHAPTER 72

King – Elites and Subjects – Slaves

Gian Pietro Basello

The god in the winged ring is hovering above; the king stands alone on the top of a dais; his attendants stand behind him; the dais is supported by two rows of advancing people. This image from the tomb relief of Darius at Naqsh-e Rostam is a hierarchical representation of power (Jacobs 2002: pp. 357–373): the god is the only bestower of kingship and the king is in direct relationship with him; the faithful servants are rewarded with a place near the king; the king is the only one who can control and coordinate the efforts of so many people; the people willingly collaborate with and support the king.

This image can also be a symbolic representation of the society from the ideological point of view of the king: everyone is subjected to the king; the elite is next to him, but at a smaller scale; the god, even beyond a social discourse, acts as a source of social legitimation. Written labels identify the subjects as peoples, attesting that ethnicity (i.e. the social and cultural interpretation of genetic relationship wider than family and kinship, often ideologically created or enforced) was a relevant element in social identification (horizontal/ethnic stratification), as it is expected in a pre-nation environment where spatial borders cannot be exactly defined.

In this ideological representation, the Persians are one people among others, *primi inter pares*, since they are represented in the first human figure of the top row of dais-bearers (the first from left i.e. the last advancing toward right, but probably the direction of writing prevailed). Anyway, Persians are not recognizable among the supporting figures in the variations of this iconography occurring in the palaces of Persepolis.

Actually, there was also a strong vertical/class stratification. According to Herodotus (1.134.1),

When they [i.e. the Persians] encounter each other in the street, there is a way of recognising whether those meetings are of the same rank. Because instead of hailing each other, they kiss on the mouth. If one is a little lower in status than the other, they kiss on the cheek. But if one is a great deal lower in standing than the other, he falls to the ground and pays homage to the other. (Transl. Kuhrt 2007: p. 624; also Str. 15.3.20)

Other passages of classical authors mention also distinctions in food (Hdt. 1.133.1) and in dress (Str. 15.3.19) which are quite obvious in themselves but interesting for the details. Horizontal/ethnic and vertical/class stratifications were strictly intertwined in the definition of social status, which could be judged differently according to the social point of the beholder. Again through the lens of Herodotus (1.107.2), the father of Cyrus the Great was a Persian of good family (*oikia agathē*) considered much lower (*pollōi enerthe*) than a Mede of middle rank (*mesos anēr Medos*).

More or less reliable, these passages refer to the Persians and cannot be applied to the peoples under Achaemenid control. In principle, we must distinguish the Persian social system from the other local societies. In practice, society is the result of human interaction and, in our case, it is the sum of the relations between Persians and other peoples in a given area. The other peoples broadly maintained their social structure evolving more or less gradually under the pressure of the Achaemenid control and the presence of a Persian *ethno-classe dominante*. These two factors were not fixed in space and time, so it is clear that various Achaemenid-controlled societies were in existence and that regional differences cannot be underestimated. In this melting pot it is sometimes difficult to recognize what is Persian, what is local, what is a development of the local society prompted by Persian contact and vice versa. New directions in research are less compelled to single out these ingredients and prefer to view the Achaemenid social system as the result of reciprocal acculturations, i.e. something new that is neither Persian nor local. Moreover, contacts did not just show up from one day to another like after a military conquest. In Susiana, Persians and Elamites were in touch from at least a century before Cyrus the Great, probably much more: in the Neo-Elamite administrative tablets from the acropolis of Susa (seventh or even sixth century BCE), some groups qualified as “Persians” (*Parsa-p*) received clothes from the central administration (Henkelman 2003: pp. 211–213).

At the same time, the various strata of personal and social identity (ethnic group, occupation, cultic practice, civil status, income, etc.) are functional factors in human life and as such were recognized by ancient sources, which used

repeatedly labels as “Persian” or “Achaemenid.” The Achaemenid royal inscriptions (ARI) emphasized the many peoples and regions of the Achaemenid-controlled world, singled out using a taxonomy which seems to correspond to ethnic appartenance. This usage seems to be handed down in the pseudo-Aristotelian *De mundo* (398a), thought to have been written in the first century CE, or even earlier:

The entire empire of Asia ... had been divided up into peoples (*kata ethnē*) ...
(Transl. Wieshöfer 1996: p. 34).

The prominent usage of this category reflects the widening of horizons brought by Achaemenid military conquests, in turn following the displacements of people of the first half of the first millennium BCE. The efforts of the historian aim at understanding which identity categories were relevant, and the meaning and status given to the corresponding identity labels.

Tribes

The theory about early Iranian threefold functional division (warriors, cattle breeders, and priests in the Avesta) proposed by scholars like Benveniste and Dumézil is not much supported by Achaemenid textual evidence. It has been applied to the three calamities listed in the following passage from one of the most ancient ARI (DPd/OP:13–24 on the southern platform wall of Persepolis): “May Ahuramazda protect this country from army, famine (*dušiyāra-*) and lie (*drauga-*)!”. Rather, horizontal stratification seems to prevail in the social organization. In the framework of the ascent of Cyrus, Herodotus (1.125.3–4) wrote:

There are many tribes (*genē*) of Persians. The ones whom Cyrus got together ... were the ones on whom all the other Persians depended (*artaesthai*): Pasargadae, Maraphii, Maspii. Of these, the Pasargadae are the noblest (*aristoi*), and to them belongs the Achaemenid clan (*phratría*), from which all the Persian kings come. The other Persian tribes are: Panthialaei, Derusiaei, Germanii – they are all agriculturalists (*arotēres*); the others are pastoralists (*nomades*): Dai, Mardi, Dropici, Sagartii. (Transl. Kuhrt 2007: p. 55)

Herodotus was mostly coherent with this framework: e.g. the Pasargadae are acknowledged as a tribe (*genos*) in 4.167.1, where also a Maraphian commander bearing an Egyptian name is mentioned; the Sagartians are a Persian people (*ethnos Persikon*) in 7.85.1 (note, however, that Achaemenids are a *genos* in 7.117.1). Other classical authors followed this framework and its, maybe, stereotypes: e.g. the Mardians (*gens Mardorum*) are described by

Curtius Rufus (5.6.17) as a bellicose people that eats the meat of wild beasts. An Achaemenid king named Maraphis is known from a possibly interpolated verse in Aeschylus (Pers. 778, performed in Athens in 472 BCE).

Not every scholar agrees that the Maraphians are Persians: it is also possible that Maspian and Maraphian were Elamite names (Henkelman 2003: p. 213, fn. 115). Even if these names would be linguistically Elamite, we have to rely on ancient sources to understand the categorization of such peoples and I am inclined to think that Elamites were perceived as Persians or vice versa, at least from some external point of view (e.g. perhaps the role of Elam in the fall of Babylon according to *Isaiah* 21:1–10). Some Maraphians are probably attested in the Elamite administrative tablets from the Persepolis fortification wall (PFT) (Tavernier 2007: §5.4.3.4). In three tablets (PF 909–911), *Marapiaš*, preceded by the place classifier, occurs actually as a toponym. This ambivalence is attested with many other gentilics/toponyms in PFT and also in Elamite ARI. Something similar happens for the Pasargadae, which is also a name of a city (*urbs*) in Curtius Rufus (5.6.10). In my opinion, the usage of the place classifier with *Marapiaš* means “the place of the Maraphians” just like Lorestan is “(the place where) the Lurs dwell.” It is difficult to say whether the gentilic or the toponym came first and surely there is not a general rule.

In the administrative tablets from the acropolis of Susa, individuals and groups are frequently identified through their gentilic, chief name or the place where they were settled (even if we cannot always distinguish between these), attesting that such labels were functional also in pre-Achaemenid social categorization and that these groups were the main entities with which the administration dealt. The lists of subjected peoples in ARI (e.g. DSf, DSz, and DSaa), a rhetorical and ideological device in themselves, are mostly confirmed by the mention of foreign groups of workers in PFT (Henkelman and Stolper 2009) and, occasionally, by material evidence (e.g. the Greek graffiti in the quarries near Persepolis; Rollinger and Henkelman 2009: pp. 337–339).

Strabo (15.3.1), while maintaining the tribes (*phyla*) as a descriptive mean for the social categorization of the inhabitants of Persis, provided a different list: Pateischorians, Achaemenids, Magians, Kurtii, and Mardians; the latter two were brigands, the others farmers (*geōrgikoi*). Magians are well-known in the ancient sources: Gaumata is a Magian in the Bisotun rock inscription of Darius (DB) whereas other individuals are qualified as such in PFT (Tavernier 2007: §2.4.3.2); Herodotus (1.101.1) counted the Magians among the tribes (*genē*) of the Medes (*Medikon ethnos*). In the tomb relief of Darius, the figure of his spear-bearer, Gobryas, is qualified as *Pātišuvariš* “Pateischorian” in the accompanying inscription (DNc/OP); the same qualification is added to Gobryas (DB/Bab.:111) beside “Persian,” whereas the corresponding Old Persian passage (DB/OP IV:84) has only “Persian”; Gobryas is responsible (*šara-ma*) for a Pateischorian (*Patišmariš*) workman in the PFT PF-NN 1581. As in Herodotus, Mardians are set apart from the Achaemenids also for their way of life.

Even if Herodotus' division of the tribes into rulers, farmers, and pastoralists is quite sharp (Briant 1996: pp. 100–101), cultivation in the intermontane plains and short-range pastoralism coexisted at the bottom of the Persian society. The process of depopulation in Fars during the first half of the first millennium BCE suggests a relevant quota of nomadism, which diminished from the reign of Cyrus the Great on. However, the nomadic component never disappeared, as it is attested by the portrait of Kurtii and Mardians and other “brigand” tribes in the classical sources and as it is still true in today's Fars (Potts 2010).

The last part of the longest form of the royal titulary, attested in three ARI (DNa, DSe, and XPh), has been interpreted as a sequence of concentric circles defining the identity of the king:

I, PN, ... son of PN (king), Achaemenid, Persian, son of Persian, Aryan, of Aryan descent.

This sequence has been compared to the Avestan one: *nmāna* “family,” *vīs* “clan” (Old Persian *viθ-*), *zantu* “tribe,” *dayhu* “country” (Old Persian *dahyu-*) (cf. Tuplin 2010: pp. 60–61, endnote 26). Anyway, in the titulary we have three couples of qualifications and “Achaemenid” has to be seen in connection with the name of the father just as “Persian” with “son of Persian” and “Aryan” with “of Aryan lineage.” Therefore, “Achaemenid” corresponds to the “family” (*taumā-* in Old Persian, corresponding to the logogram NUMUN “lineage” in Elamite and Babylonian) but, since we cannot intend “family” as the nucleus parents-son, we should better refer to it as a “clan,” i.e. an extended family including kinship in a rather endogamous framework. The Old Persian word *viθ-* (corresponding to Elamite *ulhi* and Babylonian *É/bītu*) is used also in connection with *taumā-* (DB/OP §§14, 63) and seems to correspond to the *taumā-* (which is always used in reference to people) and its properties, meaning probably “House” (in usages like today's “Royal House”) or “household(s of a clan).” In DPd/OP:6–7, *Pārsa-* is defined as *dahyu-* but elsewhere it means “Persian,” pointing generically to the people (as an ethnic group) and the area inhabited by it; being attested in Elamite as a calque, it is possible that *dahyu-* was an Iranian concept used in the older social organization (generally referred to as “tribal system” in opposition to longer traditions of settled peoples in Mesopotamia). A cognate of Avestan *zantu* is Old Persian *zana-*, attested only in two compounds, *vispa-zana-* “of all the *zana-*” (cf. also *wspzn* “of various kinds,” said of craftsmen, in the Aramaic letter TADAE A6.10:7) and *paru-zana-* “of many *zana-*,” qualifying *dahyu-* in some titularies. Iranian evidence in the onomastics of PFT attests personal names compounded with *zana-* or *zantu-* (Tavernier 2007: §4.2.441, §4.2.708, §4.2.102). “Aryan, of Aryan descent” is absent in the Babylonian ARI except for XPh, where “descent” is rendered with a calque from the

corresponding Old Persian word (*ciça-*), as usual for Elamite; this fact seems to attest the existence of an identity category unifying different peoples which was unknown to Babylonian and Elamite vocabularies and therefore, possibly, to Mesopotamian societies.

Even if it is possible that a hierarchical formalization of peoples, tribes, and clans existed, we should look at it only as a schematic framework of greater and smaller identity categories. The origin of such identities is lost and probably it had been constructed at a certain point in time, dating it backward. As remarked by Briant, the tribe is both a genetic and a spatial reality, i.e. a people and the area inhabited by this people.

King

Horizontal (tribes, clans, etc.) and vertical (classes) social stratifications are especially interwoven in the case of the king and the royal house. From an ideological point of view, kingship strictly pertained to the dynastic house, which was named as “Achaemenid” both in ARI and in the classical sources: according to both (DB §2; e.g. Herodotus 3.75.1), this name goes back to the dynastic ancestor Achaemenes. The gentilic “Achaemenid” is attested in nearly all the ARI titularies, even in the shortest inscriptions (as CMA and CMC in the name of Cyrus at Pasargadae, or DPb at Persepolis), while it is absent in other textual typologies like the administrative tablets from Persepolis.

The ancient sources dealt frequently with the king, attesting his unique place in the society and the impact of his figure in Achaemenid-controlled and foreign societies. Unfortunately, it is difficult to go beyond anecdotes and rhetoric in search of a life-size portrait of the king (Jacobs and Trampedach 2013).

The king was not considered as a god, but acted in direct touch with the god:

Auramazda, the greatest of the gods, created me; he made me king, he bestowed this kingdom on me ... (DSf §3; transl. Kuhrt 2007: p. 492.)

I worshipped Auramazda; Auramazda bore me aid; what I commanded to be done, he caused to be successful; all I did, I did by the favour of Auramazda. (DSf §5; transl. Kuhrt 2007: p. 492.)

The syntagm “by the favour (Old Persian *vašnā*, Elamite *zaumin*, Babylonian *ina šilli* ‘under the protection’) of Ahuramazda” is a leitmotif in ARI and accompanies each deed of the king.

About the qualities of the king, the most informative sources are DNb (middle register tomb inscription of Darius at Naqsh-e Rostam), paralleled in XPl (stone table found near Persepolis), and DB:

What is right, that is my wish. I am no friend of the man who is a follower of the Lie. I am not hot-tempered. When I feel anger rising, I keep that under control by my thinking power. (DNb §2b.)

The king is the guarantor of the order and acts rightly according to the moral terms of truth (*arta*–; in opposition to lie, *drauga*–):

I was not a follower of the Lie, I was not an evil-doer – neither I nor my family (*taumā*–). I acted according to righteousness. Neither to the powerless nor to the powerful did I do wrong. Him who strove for my house (*viθ*–), him I treated well; him who did harm, I punished well. (DB §63; transl. Kuhrt 2007: p. 149.)

His election is reinforced by the divine choice. The change of state, at the accession to the throne, is marked also by the adoption of a throne name, at least from Darius I on. Thus the name Darius may be translated as “holding firm what is good” and Xerxes as “ruling over heroes” (Tavernier 2007: §1.2.14, §1.2.39).

The king was surrounded and protected by a complicated apparatus with several levels of proximity. The image written in the pseudo-Aristotelian *De mundo* (398a) is vivid:

[The king] himself, as it is heard, sat on the throne in Susa or Ecbatana, invisible to all, in a wonderful royal castle and palace domain sparkling with gold, electrum and ivory; many successive gateways and entrance halls, separated by a distance of many stades, were secured by brazen doors and mighty walls. (Transl. Wiesehöfer 1996: p. 34)

The king is also the main subject of art. His representations convey the sense of power, uniqueness, and seclusion.

Actually the royal family was large and integrated in the court hierarchy. The king had many sons and wives. Curtius Rufus (3.3.14, 21, 23–24) counted in thousands the men in the regiment named “relatives of the kings” (*cognati regis*) and in few hundreds the closest relatives (*nobilissimi propinquorum*) (3.3, 21), emphasizing the number of sons and concubines accompanying the king Darius III and his army. Marriages were mostly endogamous and between cousins (Herrenschmidt 1987).

Occasionally, PFT gave us an insight on the royal family, as in Fort. 6764 (Henkelman 2010), where an order of the king Darius (explicitly named as such) is reported, that Artashtuna had to receive 100 sheep/goats from his

House (^Aul-hi^{MEŠ}). Artashtuna, qualified as *dukšīš*, an Iranian loanword meaning “daughter, princess” or, more generically, “royal woman” (Tavernier 2007: §4.4.7.34), may be one of the daughters of Cyrus the Great, Artystone, who married Darius according to Herodotus (3.88.2).

Elites

Herodotus used many terms to refer to the Persian elite: “distinguished” (*dokimoi*), “noteworthy” (*logimoi*), “praiseworthy” (*en ainēi*), “worthy” (*axioi*), “renowned” (*onomastoi*) and “prominents” (*epiphaneis*). Other terms were used by other classical authors, e.g. “the best” (*beltiones* or *aristoi*), “the friends (of the king)” (*philoι*), “the foremost” (*prōtoi*) or “of best lineage/birth” (*eugenestatoi*). The multiplicity of these terms seems to allude to the existence of a hierarchical structure (underlined also by the superlative degrees) but the external perspective does not allow us to reconstruct it.

The classical sources generally do not distinguish the elite (i.e. the people sharing the management of the power of the king) from the nobility, being considered as largely coinciding. Nobility was defined by lineage, but also, as expected, wealth was relevant. According to Herodotus (3.68.1), Otanes was a peer of the foremost Persians (*homoios tōi prōtōi Perseōn*) by lineage (*genos*) and richness (*chrēma*); the same was true for Orxines, outstanding (*eminens*) by nobility (*nobilitas*) and richness (*divitiae*) according to Curtius Rufus (10.1.22). The lineage (*genus*) was the criterion for evaluating Persian nobility (*nobilitas*) and distinguishing the mass (*vulgus*). This practice is also true for Alexander the Great, according to Curtius Rufus (6.2.9).

The prestige of the lineage went back to the tribal system, connecting again horizontal and vertical social stratification as for the king. According to Claudius Aelianus (NA XII,21; c. 200 AD), the Persian nobility (*eugeneia*) came down from Achaemenes while, in Herodotus (3.65.6), the dying Cambyses addressed the most noteworthy (*logimōtatoi*) of the Persians (3.65.1), urging especially the Achaemenids that were there.

The textual sources emphasize the six houses (Old Persian *taumā-*; Greek *oikia*); seven with Darius’ one but only four in DB/Ar = TADAE C2.1, XI:74–78) to which belonged the “followers” (Old Persian *anušya-*; Rossi 2003) who supported Darius’ ascent to power (DB §§68–69; Hdt. 3.70, 83–4; Briant 1996: pp. 140–144). Marginally, seven are the best (*aristoi*) Persians in attendance on Cyrus the Younger who are summoned to judge his enemy Orontas (Xen. Anab. 1.6.4–11). According to Herodotus (3.70.1), the first two to be chosen by Otanes and said to be “*prōtoi* of the Persians” were Gobryas and Aspathines. They were the only two attendants of the king deserving to be remembered by name on the tomb of Darius I: in the labels related to their figures in relief, Gobryas is said to be the spear-bearer of Darius and a

Patischorian (DNc), whereas Aspathines is said to be his clothes-bearer (hapax, disputed meaning) (DNd). Clothes-bearer and spear-bearer were probably honorific titles, at least ordinarily. Surely they were not simply attendants, but friends and counselors of the king. Both were also known from PFT.

The grammarian Erychius reported a Persian word, *azatai* in Greek writing, and glossed it as “those who are the nearest to the king.” This word is not known in the extant Old Persian documentation but it is attested in the Avesta as *āzāta* where it covers two distinct concepts: “free” (not a slave) and “noble” (not a commoner). Etymologically, it is connected to the root *zan-* “to give birth to” with the preverb *ā-* meaning “born in/into,” with a reference to nobility by birth (De Blois 1985).

The Achaemenids are styled as *āmātā* in DB/OP I:7. This word is a hapax legomenon and it is generally translated “nobles.” The Elamite and Babylonian words used in the corresponding passages are respectively *šalut* and *mār banī*. The first, probably a verbal form from *šalu-* “gentleman,” is attested only in the Achaemenid period, except for an occurrence in the Persepolis bronze plaque (late Neo-Elamite period). *Šalu-* is frequently attested in PFT where it is used in opposition to *lipa* “servant” and especially *pubu* “boy”; sometimes it qualifies *ruh* “man.” *Mār banī* “son of the good” occurs in Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian inscriptions with the meaning of “citizen” and “free-man.” In ARI it is attested also with reference to the foremost followers (*fratamā anušyā* in Old Persian) of Gaumata (DB §13 and passim) and in opposition to *muškēnu* “commoner, poor” (DNb §8a). In the latter passage, *mār banī* translates Old Persian *tunuvant-* “powerful” which was used with reference to the elite too.

We should not understand birth as an absolute parameter in order to become part of the elite (Briant 1996: pp. 342–344). On one hand, the pre-eminence of the Achaemenid clan is a product of the rule of the Achaemenid kings and therefore it was ideologically created, manipulated, and dated back. On the other hand, the court, the administration, and the army gave new opportunity of career, even if it is difficult to guess how much it was to the detriment of the hierarchies of the tribal system. Royal favor played a relevant role, giving gifts and renown to more or less worthy people (Briant 1996: pp. 344–346), and therefore promoting advisors and soldiers, as can be shown by the story of Pheraulus (Xen. Cyr. 8.3.5–50; also 2.3.7–16), even if anecdotal. The favor of the king is stated also in ARI:

The man who cooperates, him do I reward according to his cooperation. (DNb §2c; transl. Kuhrt 2007: p. 504; see also DB §63.)

This was true also for foreigners: Herodotus (8.85.3) mentioned a Samian who was included (*anagraphein*) in the “benefactors of the king” (Briant 1996: pp. 315–316). Anyway, the tribal system remained a relevant element

throughout the Achaemenid reign if the above-mentioned Orxines was the satrap of the *Persica gens* of the *Pasargada* at the time of Alexander the Great (Curt. 10.1.22).

The power of the elite was based on landownership (Briant 1996: pp. 346–348). PFT hint to the large estates of outstanding members of the royal house and the court like Artashtuna and Artapama (Henkelman 2010). Also Arshama and Akhvamazda dealt with their own estates respectively in Egypt (e.g. TADAE A6.7, A6.10) and Bactria (Naveh and Shaked 2012, A2, A6) in their correspondences. High-ranking Persian houses, including the crown prince, had land properties in Babylonia (Stolper 1985: pp. 52–69). The relevance of land has suggested that the relationships between social strata were based on principles similar to those used in the feudal system of Western medieval Europe; according to Petit, in Xenophon (especially in the judgment of Orontas; Anab. 1.6.4–11) there are many elements pointing to the existence of a commendation ceremony establishing a relationship of vassalage which was replicated also in satrapal courts (Petit 2004; cf. Tuplin 2010).

The nobility had a relevant role also in the army. The word *kāra-*, used in Old Persian to refer both to the people and the army, has probably to be understood as a reference to the elite, seen as privileged also for warfare. The army was, therefore, a mirror of the Persian society. In the army of Darius III, Arrian (Anab. 3.11.8) distinguished the highly regarded (*entimoi Persai*) from the mass (*plēthos*).

The classical authors emphasize the participation to the table of the king as a prominent element of social distinction. Heracleides of Kyme (fourth century BCE), cited by Athenaeus (*Deipnosophistae* 4.145a–146a), gave the most thorough account, but references were made also by Herodotus, Ctesias, and Xenophon. Many words (*syndeipnoi*, *homotrapezoi*, *syntrapezoi*, *syssitoi*, *homositoi*) were used to refer to its participants. Through this meal, the king strengthened the tie with the elite nurturing his followers (Briant 1996: p. 320). Anyway, words like *homotrapezoi* are used as a title (*homotrapezoi kaloumenoi* in Xen. Anab. 1.8.26), suggesting that the table of the king was more an institution established to redistribute food rather than an actual common/daily meal.

Subjects

In DB, every time a leader of the Persian army is introduced by name, he is called “my *baⁿdaka-*” in the direct speech of the king. This Old Persian word is connected to the same Indo-European root of the English verb “to bind” and points to those who are bound by loyalty and dependence to the king (Briant 1996: pp. 335–337); some elements, especially the judgment of

Orontas whose condemnation to death was expressed taking him by his belt (Xen. Anab. 1.6.10), suggest that this relationship was symbolized wearing such accessory (Petit 2004: pp. 191–192). The word corresponding to *baⁿdaka-* in the Babylonian text is *qallu*, the most common word for “slave” in the sixth century BCE (Jursa 2010: p. 238 and fn. 1398; Kleber in Culbertson 2011: p. 101). In the so-called Letter of Gadatas, the king Darius I called Gadatas his *doulos* ‘slave’ in Greek; Briant has proved that the letter is a Hellenistic or Roman forgery, confirming the Greek ideological view that one has to give up his own civic rights to befriend a king (Hdt. 7.135.2–3).

From the ideological point of view of the king, everyone had to bear tribute and obey his *dāta-* “law”:

These are the peoples who obeyed me; by the favor of Auramazda, they were my faithful subjects (*baⁿdakā*); they bore me ‘tribute’; what was said to them by me ..., that they did. (DB §7; transl. Kuhrt 2007: p. 143)

In the army and in the entourage of Cyrus the Great, Xenophon distinguished the *homotimoi* and the people (*dēmotoi*): the first lived subsisting on others’ work (Cyr. 8.1.16); the latter had to work for a living. Xenophon (Cyr. 7.5, 67) and Aelianus (VH I,32) called the latter *autourgoi*, i.e. farmers who cultivate their small piece of land on their own. For example, the abovementioned Pheraulus is described as a “Persian of the people” (*Persēstōn dēmotōn*) (Cyr. 2.3.7). As mentioned above, Herodotus considered some tribes as a whole subjected to others, and split them into farmers and pastoralists. Farming and pastoralism were the main occupations for the common people. In DPd/OP:17, 19–20, Darius asked Ahuramazda twice to protect the country from the “bad year” (*dušiyāra-*), a reference to subsistence farming and pastoralism.

The rich documentation from Babylonia attests that institutions like temples and private owners were forced to make widespread use of hired workers in handicraft production, agriculture, and construction works. This countless mass consisted of formally free and land-deprived peasants.

The new geopolitical framework provided several chances of social mobility through commerce and service to the state apparatus. A new middle-class, more and more detached from the tribal system, developed gradually (Briant 1996: p. 345). Anyway, it is likely that nothing changed at the lowest level, at least not abruptly. The social differentiation was probably great, as could be shown by the repeated usage of the opposition “powerful” and “poor, weak” (*tunuvāⁿt-* and *skauθi-* in Old Persian) in ARI (DNb/OP:8–11; DB/OP IV:65, §63, translated above; DSe/OP: 39–41) and in the classical authors.

Movements of people, forced or not, were common in the ancient Near East since the Neo-Assyrian kingdom and represented a means of political,

economic, and demographic control. Some ethnic groups, transplanted in alien social contexts, could maintain a special status of partial autonomy with their own hierarchy, as shown by some sources (e.g. the Jewish garrison at Elephantine; see Stolper 1984: pp. 306–310 for a possible Babylonian enclave at Mtezish in Persia).

Slaves

Slavery was a common practice in Mesopotamian societies (Culbertson 2011). Often it is difficult to distinguish slavery from serfdom since many people lived in poor conditions at the full service of institutions or private owners, often bound to the land they cultivated for others (Kleber in Culbertson 2011: pp. 104–105). In a modern definition, a man is a slave when he can be sold as every other property (chattel slave).

Slavery is attested in Elam from the late third millennium BCE on, even if occasionally, both with private slaves and larger groups in institutional contexts. According to Ctesias (FGrH 90F66 [2]), in Media a custom (*nomos*) existed where a poor man could become a *doulos* of a rich person if the latter agreed to feed him.

Patriarchal slavery in the Persian tribal organization was hinted at by Aristotle (Eth. Nic. 8.10.4), who noted that among the Persians the father treats his sons as *doulos*. Anyway, this passage, like an anecdote emphasizing the harsh figure of a Persian father in Aelianus (VH 1.34), seems far from convincing, being used in response to other aims (a comparison between monarchy and tyranny).

In the Achaemenid period, slavery is well documented in the Babylonian area (Dandamaev 1984; Jursa 2010: pp. 232–240), especially through the private documentation of business firms like Murashu and Egibi. Apart from such extended entities (the Egibi owned at least one hundred slaves), wealthy Babylonian families owned some slaves, even if mostly fewer than five (Jursa 2010: pp. 225, 233). On this basis, it is generally stated that forced labor was not a major resource in the Achaemenid period. The use of slaves as forced laborers in agriculture is not well attested, but this is rather a problem of our documentation (Jursa 2010: pp. 234–235). Slaves generally performed various types of household works and they were often employed as skilled craftsmen (barbers, textile workers, smiths, and bakers). Occasionally they enjoyed considerable freedom in order to manage the assets of their owners, sometimes acting as independent entrepreneurs. For example, from a Babylonian tablet we know that a slave represented his master in Susa (Jursa 2010: p. 238). Slaves could have families and own property as a result of their own work. In legal courts their interest seems to be considered equal to freemen's

(Dandamaev 1984: pp. 429–437). In some cases slaves were released with the payment of a fixed quitrent from their property.

Debt slavery was no longer widespread in the Achaemenid period. Besides house-born slaves (from slave families), an increasing number of slaves was provided by slave trade, mainly between private slave owners, but professional traders are also attested (Jursa 2010: pp. 225–228). Enslaved prisoners of war are mentioned in the sources and many slaves were of foreign origins (Dandamaev 1984: pp. 107–111).

Being land owners, the Persian elites became also major slave owners in Babylonia and other conquered countries (Dandamayevev 1963). A document attests that two persons bearing an Iranian name sold two slave women, also bearing Iranian names, to a man with a Babylonian name and descent; other slaves with Iranian names are known (Dandamaev 1984: pp. 110–111).

The documentation from Susiana and Persia proper is scarce. In a text found at Susa, a woman leases her daughter to another woman; the text is internally dated to the reign of one of the kings named Artaxerxes (Stolper 1984: p. 309, fn. 36).

Four of the eleven Babylonian texts related to a place named Humadeshu record slave sales. Most of these texts are dated to the reign of Cambyses and were found in Babylon according to their collection numbers. At least in part, they are connected to the Egibi firm and the onomastics is mainly Babylonian. Humadeshu has been identified with the city named Uvādaicaya in Old Persian (DB/OP III:51), corresponding to Matezish in DB/Elam. III:19. Matezish is largely attested in PFT and it should have been the principal settlement near Persepolis (Stolper 1984: pp. 306–308, updated in Henkelman 2008: p. 338, fn. 792). In the texts BM 30704 and BM 30682 both slaves and their owners bore Iranian names such as Ataršitra and Bagapata, while the buyers bore Babylonian names. Of course, we cannot be sure that the slaves were actually Iranians or were given Iranian names by their Iranian owners (Zadok 1976: p. 74; Briant 1996: p. 100). The Humadeshu texts attest the organized presence of Babylonians in the core of Persia and their interplay with Iranians.

The only Babylonian text (Stolper 1984) found among PFT, internally dated to Darius I's reign, is a legal document attesting the sale of a slave. It is anomalous not only for its language, but also for being a private document. The onomastics is Babylonian and it could be the product of a social environment similar to the one known from the Humadeshu texts, just some years later.

Scholars expected slavery to be well attested in PFT where the term *kurtaš* is often used to designate anonymous workers in groups. According to Dandamaev, the *kurtaš* of Persepolis were slaves and only later the term acquired the broader meaning of 'worker'. Anyway, whereas a foreign ethnic designation is often associated with *kurtaš* (Henkelman, Stolper 2009) and the presence of prisoners of war appears to be obvious in Persia, it is possible

that also free people worked for wages at the service of the Achaemenids. Only in PF 871 a group of Persian *puhu* is designated as *kurtaš* in the final summary. *Kurtaš* is probably an Iranian loanword to be compared to Old Indian *grhá-* “house servant, house” (Tavernier 2007: §4.4.7.54). It is attested also in the Aramaic letters of Arshama as *grd* and, probably, in Babylonian texts of the Achaemenid period as *gardu* (Stolper 1985: pp. 55–59). In an Aramaic letter from Arshama (second half of the fifth century BCE) to one of his stewards in Egypt, *grd* is used repeatedly:

Strictly guard my domestic staff (*grd*) and goods so that there will not be any decrease in my estate. Moreover, from elsewhere seek domestic staff (*grd*) of craftsmen of all kinds (*wspzn*) in sufficient numbers, and bring them into my court, and mark them with my brand ... (Transl. Porten in TADAE A6.10: pp. 5–8.)

Kurtaš is found also in DB/Elam. I:49 where it was used in correspondence to Old Persian *mānya-* (DB/OP I:65), probably meaning “household servant,” and Babylonian *agru* “hired laborer” (DB/Bab.:26). Therefore, a general meaning of “household worker” seems to be preferable to “slave” for Old Iranian **grda* and related loanwords. Coming back to PFT, the terms *lipa-* (corresponding to *baⁿdaka-* in DB/OP) and *puhu* (Giovinazzo 1995) seem to point to subordinate personnel of lower status, probably slaves in some cases. As Henkelman remarked, “[their] numbers ..., and therefore their role in the Persepolis economy, are limited in comparison to those of the *kurtaš*,” supporting the above-stated view that slavery was not economically relevant in the Achaemenid period.

In Egypt there was a considerable number of slaves of Libyan and Cilician origin. Unfortunately, less is known about slavery in eastern Iran and in Central Asia.

* * *

The social impact of the Achaemenid control, both at high levels (reconfiguration of power and offices, career in the army and administration, widening of markets) and low levels (land use, demand of hired workers and soldiers, slaves from conquered countries), is one of the most promising topics for future research. Persia, Babylonia, Anatolia, and Egypt are the leading areas, while more is to be expected from Caucasus and Central Asia. The interaction between Persian and local elites and the contacts between different ethnic groups were the main engine of social changes. The ever increasing bulk of information, due to new archeological excavations, the critical reassessment of previously found evidence, and the improved management of large epigraphic corpora through digital tools, will be one of the main challenges for the

scholars trying to use all the available data. The key assumption is to consider ancient societies as complex as ours, providing chronological and geographical depth to the research, and therefore avoiding generalizations that we would never apply to the societies in which we live.

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CHAPTER 73

Banquet and Gift Exchange

Jacob L. Wright and Meredith Elliott Hollman

Research Context

Within the cultural matrix of the Achaemenid Empire, gift exchange served as a physical means of representing and renegotiating social hierarchy. As a tangible representation of conferred honors, the gift was symbolic capital. Feasting is closely akin to gift exchange: By means of both activities, one converts prestige objects and material surplus into social bonds and political power. Yet in feasting, the gift is ingested and thereby destroyed. For the Achaemenid Empire, both gift exchange and feasting represent important strategies with which the court sought to centralize an expansive empire in the person of the king.

Not only classical but also biblical literature devotes significant space to descriptions of Persian practices of gift exchange and feasting, as their authors deemed them to be of paradigmatic-pedagogical value for their readers.¹ When approached cautiously, these witnesses provide valuable supplements to the range of other evidence – non-literary cuneiform and Aramaic texts, iconography, architecture, objects from material culture, etc. – witnessing to the Achaemenids' extraordinarily sophisticated, meritorious conventions of gift exchange, honor, and rewards. Recent studies have laid the groundwork for a more critical study of the subject by investigating primary evidence, from both material culture (Miller 2010; Kistler 2010) and cuneiform archives (Henkelman 2010, 2011). While the present chapter cites classical (and

biblical) literature extensively, it does so with the understanding that this literature is interpretative and often does not reflect firsthand experiences with Persian customs.²

The King as Receiver and Giver

The Great King sat at the center in an elaborate network of gift exchange. As both the chief recipient and the supreme benefactor, he could share from his unsurpassed wealth (Xen. *Hell.* 6.1.12; Ath. 12.546). Due to his ability to out-give all others (Hdt. 3.139–140, 7.27–29, 38–39), he also stood to receive more gifts (Xen. *Anab.* 1.9.22). Reliefs from the Apadana in Persepolis depict subject peoples bearing gifts to the Achaemenid ruler. In contrast to earlier Egyptian and Assyrian tribute scenes, these reliefs avoid “any blatant allusion to the obligatory nature of a tribute rendition” (Root 1979: p. 284). The satrapal courts emulated the royal court in its rhetoric of gift-bringing and formal processions (Miller 2010; Kistler 2010).

Aelian claims that it was a custom of the Persians to meet the king with gifts when he visited their towns (*VH* 1.31–32). Subjects and political allies were expected to put their resources at the king’s disposal (Hdt. 7.27–28, 7.118–120; Xen. *Cyr.* 5.4.29–30, 8.2.15–23). The later system of taxing goods has its origins in the “shares of the king” (*bāji-(ka)*, likely from OP **baga*; Greek: *tagé*). In Achaemenid times, the system of *bāji-* was extended to include all the forms of tribute and gifts, which were stored in royal magazines that supplied the king and his royal troops as they traveled throughout the empire.

By redistributing gifts and tribute to the circle of his closest supporters, the king strengthened the personal bonds to his power base. The royal table served as a central redistribution center. Provisions for the king’s daily meals were a huge expense paid from both the private estates of the palace and gifts from the provinces (Henkelman 2010). In turn, the king shared from his meals (compare “*pat-bag* of the king” in Dan. 1 to OP **upayāta*). From his table, the king distributed durable gifts of great value (Menel., *Od.*, 4.615–619) and conferred titles and honors (Xen. *Cyr.* 8.2.2–4; 8.4.1–28; Plut. *Pel.* 30.4, *Artax.* 22.1; cf. Ath. 2.48e). The tables of the satraps and governors were modeled on that of the king (Neh. 5:14–18 and Wright 2010).

Peoples who surrendered to the Persians without resistance, or whom the Persians could not manage to integrate into the imperial administration, were expected to send annually “gifts” (*dora*) that they collected themselves – consisting of gold, ebony, ivory, frankincense, as well as many boys and girls. All others, with the exception of the Persian homeland, paid “tributes” (*phoroi*) collected by the imperial/satrapal administration (Hdt. 3.13, 3.89, 3.97; see however DB §7).

Gifts from the king were highly coveted, bringing both wealth and honor. Various clues point to the existence of “royal gifts” with which the king honored “good actions” (Briant 2002: p. 305). Thus a vase was found in the treasury at Persepolis engraved with the inscription: “I am from Xerxes the King.” Aelian mentions a “Median” robe labeled *dorophorike* (“given as a gift,” *VH* 1.22). The wearing of robes, jewelry, and weaponry from the king was perhaps obligatory for court officials; for others it was a way to advertise their favored status (Plut. *Alex.* 18.8). According to Xenophon, one was allowed to possess or display ostentatious symbols of wealth only if s/he had received them from the king (*Cyr.* 8.2.7–8). Royal gifts made known that the throne was the source of the bearer’s rank and authority (Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1989). All power and wealth flowed directly from the king and the royal table.

Achaemenid monarchs cultivated a reputation for *polydoria* in which they lavishly rewarded acts of service (XPl 26–31; Xen. *Cyr.* 8.2.9–12; *Anab.* 1.9.11–15; Hdt. 7.135; 8.10.3). The inscriptions of Darius and Xerxes express the principle of “justice” (*arštām*) underlying the compensatory system (DB §8, §§60–69 as well as DNb §§8, 16–17; Hdt. 1.136; Xen. *Cyr.* 1.2.7, 8.1.39; the Gadatas-Edict; Thuc. 1.129.3; for the reward of valiant soldiers by the king, see Hdt. 3.154; 7.194; 8.10, 86, 88–90; Xen. *Anab.* 1.9.15; *Oec.* 4.6–10). A recurring literary motif is the tale of an individual raised from obscurity to prosperity in return for exceptional service (Ael. *VH* 1.32; Hdt. 3.139–140, 144, as well as the biblical court tales of Joseph, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, and others).

A formal occasion on which the king bestowed gifts was the banquet on his birthday (Hdt. 9.110). The gift-giving ceremony itself was called *tykta* (<OP **tuxta*; see Henkelman 2011 for other cultic feasts). When returning to Persepolis, the king supposedly gave a gold piece to the Persian women as a reward for their historic contributions (Nic. Dam. *FGrH* 90 F66.16–45). Other occasions were likely the times when a successor was designated, on throne-accession conquests, and during the New Year’s festivals (Plut. *Artax.* 26.3, Ctes. *FGrH* 688, F 15.49; Cyrus Cylinder; Ezra 1:1–4; 5:13–15; 6:3–5, Neh. 2:1–8).

The Achaemenid rulers often bestowed gifts on peoples and cities in demonstrations of royal benefaction (*energesia*; see the Cyrus Cylinder, the Verse Account of Nabonidus, the Udjashorresnet inscription, DB §14, Ezra 1–8 and Neh. 2).

Items of Exchange

Within numerous lists of Persian gifts, a few specific items are repeatedly attested: garments/textiles, jewelry, cups, other food service items, furnishings, horses, slaves and concubines, children, and a special scimitar (*akinákē*).

Textiles featured embroidery, often gold, on fabric of costly purples, reds, and blues (Hdt. 3.20, 3.84, 9.80.2, 3.20.1, 9.109.1; Xen. *Anab.* 1.2.27; Xen. *Cyr.* 8.2.8; 8.3.3; Ath. 12.535a, 12.539b–540a; Ael. *VH* 1.32; Esther 6:9). “Median” garments (Ael. *VH* 1.22; Hdt. 3.84.1; 7.116) likely included the traditional aristocratic riding habit depicted in the Apadana reliefs (Figure 94.6). Presents could also consist of food and drink (Ael. *VH* 1.31; Xen. *Anab.* 1.9.25–26), which extended table-fellowship in conditions of geographical separation (see below). Monetary gifts were the exception (PT 4; PT 5; Hdt. 3.130.5; Plut. *Artax.* 22.5; Ael. *VH* 1.32; Str. 15.3.21). Ctesias mentions “a golden millstone” as “the most outstanding gift the king can give among the Persians.” While such a common object seems out of place next to goblets, millstones were proverbial in antiquity for their weight. Typical items of exchange included:

- command of an army (Hdt. 9.109.3 [to a young woman!]; Nep. *Dat.* 3; Diod. Sic. 16.52.2; Xen. *Cyr.* 4.1.4);
- a house or multiple houses (Hdt. 3.132; 9.116; Neh. 2:8; Xen. *Cyr.* 8.4.28, 6.3; Nep. *Paus.* 3, 4);
- estates (Hdt. 6.70, 8.85; Xen. *Hell.* 3.1.6);
- permission to rebuild a city or temple (Ezra 1, 5–6; Neh. 2; 1 Esd. 4);
- governance of city or *tyrannis* over it (e.g. as a reward for military assistance: Hdt. 5.11; see additional cases in Klinkott 2005: pp. 187–194);
- governance of province or satrapy (Hdt. 3.140; 5.11; 9.107; Diod. Sic. 15.91.1; Xen. *Anab.* 1.1.6; 1.9.14; Ezra 5:14; Neh. 5:14; Dan. 2:48);
- title to a throne (e.g. Plut. *Mor.* 225 C);
- tax exemption (e.g. Ezra 7:24, Gadatas-Edict, the Cyrus Cylinder, the Udjashorresnet inscription, and discussion in Wiesehöfer 1989);
- the hand of the king’s/nobleman’s daughter in marriage (Hdt. 5.116, 7.2, 7.73; Xen. *Cyr.* 4.6.9; 5.2.7; Plut. *Artax.* 27.7–9; Thuc. 1.128);
- inclusion among the king’s “kin” (*syngeneis* – Diod. Sic. 17.20.2, 17.59.2; Arr. 3.11.5; Curt. 3.3.14, 21; and discussion in Briant 2002: pp. 309–312, 331–338).
- honorary titles (cupbearer, mace-bearer, scepter-bearer, etc.) and registration of name/deeds in court records (such as the “Catalogue of the King’s Benefactors” called *orosangai* [<Med. **varusanha*-]; see Xen. *Cyr.* 8.1.39; *Oec.* 4.7; Diod. Sic. 17.59.2; Gadatas-Edict; Ael. *VH* 1.32; Hdt. 3.140, 4.143, 8.85; Esther 2:21–23; 6:1–14; and Wiesehöfer 1980).

The most common objects of exchange were toreutics in precious metals and especially the “Achaemenid cups,” which not only signify the convergence of banqueting and gift-giving but also exhibit the central political role of commensality. The Apadana reliefs depict at least eleven different delegations bearing

these chalices. On the basis of burials, Miller (2010) argues that many of the precious vessels originated in the context of satrapal workshops; they were used to establish and consolidate relations with the local elite. These cups belonged to the Achaemenid imperial “koine,” with their material and quality delineating a hierarchy (see Kistler 2010). The cups are well attested in the Greek sources (e.g. Lys. 19.25; Hdt. 7.190; Xen. *Cyr.* 8.3.33–35; *Anab.* 4.4.21).

Satrapas and tyrants made gifts of land as well as movable objects to those under them, in keeping with the *imatio regis* principle that informed the imperial administration (see discussion of literature in Klinkott 2005: pp. 202–204).

The King’s Table

The royal table, in its abundance and variety, became a symbol for the vast and powerful Achaemenid Empire, which was ruled from the table as much as from the throne. The kings stood at the head in an empire-wide hierarchy of hosts. The opulence of the royal banquet mirrored the power of the rulers, who understood conspicuous consumption to be an essential strategy for preventing ambitious courtiers from attempting to usurp the throne.

The varieties of foods consumed at the royal table mirrored the diversity of the empire (cf. Figure 55.6). Such is brought to visual expression by the dramatic iconography at Persepolis and Susa (see Figures 50.1 and 50.2, 55.2, 59.1 and 59.2). All nations were expected to send provisions for the royal board (Ael. *VH* 1.31; Ath. 9.393c). A record of provisions includes items from Egypt to India (Polyaen. 4.3.32; c. Xen. *Cyr.* 8.6.13; Ath. 1.28d, 2.45a–b, 12.529d, 14.652b–c; Str. 15.3.22, and Jacobs 2010). Estates and “paradises” were maintained in the satrapies to provide for the local and royal courts. Both cuneiform evidence from Persepolis and the classical authors witness to the existence of these farms (Plin. *NH* 6.143; cf. Theophr. *Hist. pl.* 2.6.7; Tuplin 1996).

According to Heraclides (Ath. 4.145–146), the king dined alone with the guests outside. After a feast, the host and his most honored guest or closest associates retired to a separate room to converse over wine (Ath. 4.145c; Ael. *VH* 8.7, 12.1). During these *symposia*, the men enjoyed performances by “music-girls” and the company of concubines (Plut. *Mor.* 140b; Ael. *VH* 8.7). They carried on late into the night until they were thoroughly inebriated (Ath. 4.145c; Xen. *Cyr.* 8.8.10; Ar. *Ach.* 2.12; Hdt. 8.67–69; Str. 15.3.20). Matters were discussed in a highly intoxicated state in the evening and then again in full sobriety; those proposals that made sense in both contexts were instituted (Hdt. 1.133; Str. 15.3.20; Ath. 4.144b).

Greek sources refer to the wives of the king sitting beside him during the banquet and being sent away after the meal (e.g. Plut. *Mor.* 140b; *Artax.* 5.3;

yet see Neh. 2:6; 1 Esd. 4:28–32; Esther 1:11 et passim). Yet on the basis of Elamite sources, we know that the royal women had their own table, which was an institution in its own right and recognized as such by the Persepolis administration. The sons of the women sat at their table until well into maturity. The women followed their own travel itineraries to visit their domains, bringing with them their table entourages (Henkelman 2010).

Heraclides (Ath. 4.145e) claims that each day 1000 animals were slaughtered for the king's table (cf. Polyæn. 4.3.32). Such prodigious quantities seem to be confirmed by disbursement receipts from the Persepolis Fortification Tablets (Henkelman 2010). As noted above, the table served as a distribution center, where the king sent the abundance of "leftovers" to his loyal ones (Ath. 4.145d–146a). Some elites depended upon these shares, which they in turn distributed among their clients. The king could demonstrate special regard by sending personally selected items or, best of all, his own half-eaten leftovers (Xen. *Anab.* 1.9.25–26; see also *Cyr.* 8.2.1–4 [leftovers as "remembrances"], 8.4.6–7). Some understood these shares to bear the king's vitality (Dan. 1).

When traveling, the king maintained his splendid table (Hdt. 1.188). Subject populations were required to supply the provisions when he visited their cities (Ath. 4.145a). The burden of the meal, whose cost Herodotus estimates at 400 silver talents (7.118–120), was reckoned as part of the tribute/gifts owed to the king.

Conspicuous Consumption and Competitive Gift-Giving

As the authors of both classical and biblical literature understood, feasting was serious business in the political calculus of the Achaemenid Empire. Elites and social climbers hosted opulent banquets as politically calculated displays of power. Should military conflicts arise, a leader's table-companions would become his comrades-at-arms (Xen. *Anab.* 1.8.25; 1.9.31; *Cyr.* 8.5.8; 8.4.3–5), bringing with them their own allies and resources (*Anab.* 1.1.9–11; Plut. *Artax.* 21.4–22.3; Hdt. 7.27–30). Insofar as charismatic leaders played the game well, they consolidated their power and extended their political influence over peoples and territories without resorting to displays of violence. In turn, guests could ingratiate themselves with a powerful person to whom they would appeal in their own time of need. Their social standing increased as their access to a powerful host, such as the king, prompted others to approach them with petitions (Xen. *Cyr.* 8.3.20–23; Esther 4).

Achaemenid banquets and gift exchange were closely related within the syntax of symbolic power among elites. The host invited guests of political

interest, and the table's splendor procured him/her social capital (e.g. Esther 5:12). Feasts provided ideal settings for elites to flaunt gifts they had received. It is no coincidence that the most popular prestige objects among the Persians were those that could be used at the table.

By means of commensality and gift-giving practiced by the local dynasts and satraps, which mimicked that of the Great King, the empire built a network connecting elites throughout the empire both to the satraps, representing the king, and to the king directly (Kistler 2010). As exemplified in the case of Histiaeus (Hdt. 5.23–24), potential political rivals could be enticed to leave the periphery, where they posed a greater threat, and assume a place in the court, serving as the king's "table companions" and advisors. The banquet hall was usually columned, similar to those of the royal court (Gopnik 2004). Diners reclined on gilded couches with embroidered cushions (Hdt. 9.82; Ath. 4.142a; Esther 1:6, image from the Karaburun tomb chamber in Jacobs 2010; *here* Figure 43.3). Tapestries in reds, blues, and purples adorned the walls, often embroidered and accented with gold (Ath. 4.147f; Esther 1:6). Worked with gold and silver, the tables held goblets, plates, and utensils of precious metals (Hdt. 9.82; Xen. *Cyr.* 5.2.7; Ath. 4.142a; 4.147f; Esther 1:7).

Seating arrangements made visible the social hierarchy among the diners (Hdt. 8.67; Xen. *Cyr.* 8.1.39; 8.6.11; Arr. 7.11.8; Diod. Sic. 19.22.2–3; Ath. 4.145c; Ael. VH 8.7). Armies of slaves served the finest foods in extravagant quantities (Xen. *Ages.* 9.3; Str. 15.3.19; Xen. *Cyr.* 1.3.6; Hdt. 133.1). Persians reportedly dined at a leisurely pace, tasting many kinds of food and eating only a small portion of each (Xen. *Cyr.* 1.3.4–5; Hdt. 1.133.2). The wealthiest Persians had access to a wide variety of foods from throughout the empire (Xen. *Cyr.* 8.6.6; Polyæn. 4.3.32) and hired chefs to invent new dishes (Xen. *Cyr.* 8.8.16; *Ages.* 9.3; *Hier.* 1.16–25; Ath. 12.545d).

Even on military campaigns, high-ranking Persians brought their banquet supplies with them (Hdt. 1.188.1; 9.82; c. Plut. *Artax.* 24.2b). Greek sources marvel at their opulent camps, which reportedly contained tents decorated with tapestries and precious metals (Hdt. 9.80; c. Ath. 2.48d, f), dining furniture and service items of gold and silver (Hdt. 9.80; Xen. *Anab.* 4.4.21), and provisions worthy of a palace kitchen (Hdt. 1.188.1; 7.83.2).

For Achaemenid satraps and elites throughout the empire, it paid to spend. A public reputation of wealth and munificence constituted an essential element of an elite Persian's power. Those seeking influence strove to "outdo" (*hyperballomai*; Xen. *Cyr.* 8.2.7) and "triumph over" (*nikao*, Xen. *Anab.* 1.9.11; Hdt. 9.18.3) one another in generosity, since whoever could offer the greatest rewards would draw more allies. One could bankrupt his rival in competitive consumption (Ath. 12.531c–e; Ael. VH, 7.2). The king participated in this system of gift-for-service politics as the supreme patron (Hdt. 7.27–30, 38–39, and Kistler 2010: pp. 433–436). By investing the royal wealth in

luxuries for his “friends” and subjects, the king could accumulate political capital and consolidate his control over a vast realm (see also Hdt. 3.89.3; 3.160.1; 3.71.4–5; Diod. 15.91.1; Nep. *Dat.* 3).

Evaluating Importance

What importance should we assign to gift-giving and feasting in the history of the Achaemenid Empire? Are these practices treated in literature just because they are more fascinating than the quotidian activities of taxation and bureaucracy? The conclusion to Sancisi-Weerdenberg’s study represents one approach: “Although there is no doubt that in actual practice the Achaemenids frequently handed out gifts, the impact of this gift-giving on the whole of the empire may rightly be doubted. Its most important function may be regarded as a legitimising ideological one” (1989: p. 141). Our survey of the evidence, however, suggests that gift-giving and feasting played a much more central role. The relationships that the king cultivated with a vast array of individuals rested on a clearly articulated system of merit, which encouraged all to seek opportunities to demonstrate loyalty to the king (Brosius 2007). The Achaemenid Empire’s longevity was due not only to military-strategic strength and superb administrative organization but also to the skillful use of gift exchange and commensality. These practices established a network connecting potential political opposition, both at the palace and in the satrapies, to the king’s table.

NOTES

- 1 Biblical literature that bears the imprint of Persian feasting includes Ezra-Nehemiah, Esther, Daniel, as well as the Joseph story, the account of King Solomon, Judith, Tobit, and 4Q550 (see Mathys 2010).
- 2 For the critical use of classical authors, see the important studies that are now appearing in Harrassowitz’s “Classica et Orientalia” series.

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FURTHER READING

- Briant, P. (2002). *From Cyrus to Alexander: A History of the Persian Empire*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns. A good discussion of feasting and gift-giving may be found at various points throughout this broad-ranging overview.
- Henkelman, W.F.M. (2010). “Consumed before the king”: the table of Darius, that of Irdabama, and Irtaštuna, and that of his satrap, Karkiš. In B. Jacobs, R. Rollinger (eds.), *Der Achämenidenhof – The Achaemenid Court* Classica et Orientalia 2. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, pp. 667–776. Presents many fascinating findings for the royal table, as well as the table of the royal women, from the cuneiform record.
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CHAPTER 74

Clothes and Insignia

Wolfgang Messerschmidt

The Riding Costume

Classical sources and archeological monuments present two entirely different garments as apparel of the inhabitants of the center of the Achaemenid Empire. In contrast to the vesture, worn by members of the royal family on representations in the royal residences, the Greeks have noticed that the Persians and their Great King also appeared in a costume, which is classified by classical authors as “Median garment” (see esp. Hdt. 1.135; on the “Median” garment as not identifying Medes lastly Stronach 2009: pp. 220–221; Stronach 2011: pp. 475–478). This costume consists of a shirt with sleeves, which the lexicographers termed *sarapis* (for the etymological problems see Henkelman 2003: pp. 201, 206–210, 228–231), tights, called *anaxyrides*, a cloak with sleeves, called *kandys* (for etymology see Schmitt 1990: pp. 757–758), and finally a headgear similar to a bashlyk known as *tiara* (for a list of pieces of clothing and literary sources see Jacobs 1994: pp. 141–143).

Consequently many vase paintings of the end of the sixth and the fifth century BCE show “Persians” dressed in sleeved shirts, tights, and bashlyks. Herodotus 7.61 mentions sleeved shirts and cuirasses(?) with iron platelets, which look like fish scales, as part of the clothing which distinguished the Persian soldiers in the army of Xerxes in 480 BCE. In the pictures of Greek vase painting sometimes a light cape is added, which covers the cuirass (Jacobs 1994: pp. 140–147).

The Greek sources continually point to the colorfulness of these garments, which were regarded as a typical item of Achaemenid *luxuria* (v. Graeve 1970: pp. 97–99). More than the vase pictures, statues prove the colorful magnificence of these wears; the so-called Persian rider of early fifth century date from the Athenian Acropolis (Brinkmann et al. 2010: pp. 108–115) and the better preserved archer from the west pediment of the temple of Aphaia at Aigina, dated to the late sixth century BCE (Brinkmann 2010a: pp. 120–121) are, for example, both dressed in colorful *anaxyrides* and leathern jackets with sleeves.

The sepulchral monuments of Asia Minor and the Levant provide many examples of persons dressed with *tiara*, *sarapis*, *kandys* and *anaxyrides*. The reliefs from Sidonian sarcophagi of the fifth and fourth centuries (Jacobs 1987: Pl. 11, 2), the epistyl frieze of the Nereid Monument at Xanthos from about 400 BCE (Jacobs 1987: Pl. 8, 2) and the reliefs from the Payawa sarcophagus from about 360 (Jacobs 1987: Pl. 7, 1–2) display hunters, gift-givers, and participants of audience scenes in this riding costume. A newly discovered sarcophagus from Çan in the Troas region shows a boar hunter, also clothed in this costume (Sevinç et al. 2001: Fig. 5–7).

The most impressive pictorial representation of this kind of garment can be found on the reliefs of the so-called Alexander sarcophagus from Sidon, dated to the late fourth century. The Persians wear the double girded *sarapis*, *anaxyrides*, shoes, *tiara*, and *kandys* (v. Graeve 1970: pp. 95–99 Pl. 24–46). The fashion in which this cloak is worn is instructive: It is used as a loose cape and fixed round the neck by a cord; thus the unused sleeves flutter. The *tiarai* have long tabs, which are wrapped around the lower part of the face; additionally they are safeguarded against shifting with a bandage (v. Graeve 1970: Pl. 56, 58–61). Due to the good state of preservation the colors grant some insight into the colorful magnificence of the riding costume. Longitudinally-drawn wide stripes were appreciated for the *sarapis* (Brinkmann 2010b: pp. 187–201 Fig. 210). The *kandys* frequently has fur lining, indicated in color on the reliefs of the sarcophagus and marking the preciousness of the cloak (Brinkmann 2010b: p. 188 Fig. 205). Also the seam of the cloak could externally be ornamented with fur applications; the *kandys* of an aristocratic person in a wall painting of the tomb of Karaburun II in southwest Turkey (Jacobs 1987: Pl. 5, 2) and the cloaks of two statuettes from the so-called Oxus Treasure (Razmjou 2005: p. 170 Nr. 258, 259) show such seams. Not only fur applications but also applications of precious metal are attested, as is demonstrated by gold leaf preserved in graves of Achaemenid times near Sardis (Özgen and Öztürk 1996: pp. 165–167 Nr. 115–119).

Many persons in riding costume on monuments of the fifth to fourth centuries BCE in Asia Minor are likely not to be Iranians but members of indigenous elites and dynasties, for whom the Achaemenid court luxury was an example. The personal names in Aramaic inscriptions from the Dascylium

stelae in northwestern Asia Minor indicate Semitic origin of the grave owners (Jacobs 2007: p. 24), but the illustrations of persons in the reliefs show them clothed with the riding costume (Jacobs 1987: Pl. 13, 1–3; Boardman 2000: p. 181 Fig. 5.61–5.62).

The refined culture and lifestyle of the Persian aristocracy had an undeniably strong appeal to the social elite groups of Greece. Particularly in fifth century BCE Athens, the garment which was regarded as “Persian” became fashionable (essentially Miller 1997: pp. 153–187). For example, some Athenian riders in the Parthenon frieze wear the *sarapis*. Inscriptions of the fourth century BCE testify to the *kandys* as the preferred cloak of noble Athenian women, which some of them dedicated to Artemis Brauronia (Miller 1997: pp. 157–158). Applications and exquisite embroideries for clothes and sleeved shirts were known as typical “Persian.” A special type of precious shoes was named “Persika/ai,” put to mockery in Aristophanes’ comedies (Ar. Nu. 151; Ar. Lys. 229). The comedy writer also mentions the existence of precious furs, named *kaunakai*, and their provenience from Ecbatana in Media (Miller 1997: pp. 153–155).

The Greeks were aware of the fact that the so-called “Median” garment was not invented by the Medians, but was conveyed to the sedentary peoples farther south and west from the Eurasian steppe and desert belt (Schmitt 1990: p. 757). This type of clothing is inseparably connected with the development of riding by nomads of the early first millennium BCE. Finds of textiles and furs in frozen tombs of the Altai, preserved due to cold climate conditions, provide information about the appearance and texture of these clothes, which were worn by men and women (Polos’mak 2001: pp. 101–126): double-girded sleeved shirts, often made of silk, which extended down to the knees and can be compared with the depictions on Greek monuments, are attested as well as trousers and felt stockings. Sometimes the stockings were pulled over only semi-long trousers; due to their strengthened soles they could be worn without shoes. But also real shoes and leather boots were used. Jackets with sleeves and cloaks with stitched-up sleeves were designed to cover the upper body. Felt caps with long tabs, which covered the ears, formed the headgear. The upright part of the cap was characterized by wooden frames or it ended in a wooden figure on the top. The materials used were leather, fur, and felt, but also woven textiles of wool, linen, and silk. Applications of leather and fur belonged to the typical ornaments; in tombs with rich accoutrement, gold threads and metal applications, sewn onto the clothes, have been found. A remarkable feature was the preference for dyeing fabrics; not only woven textiles but also furs and leathers were colored (Polos’mak 2001: pp. 107, 112–117).

The Achaemenid court art at Persepolis provides depictions of that attire. The members of delegation XI on the reliefs of the Apadana stairways wear the *tiara*, looking very much like the findings from the Eurasian graves with



Figure 74.1 Persepolis, Apadana. Relief of Northern Stairway, delegation XI. Source: Photo B. Jacobs.

their pointed top, long tabs and neck guard (Schmidt 1953: Pl. 37; *here* Figure 74.1). They wear it together with *sarapis*, tights, and simple laced shoes. The identification of the delegation with the Eurasian Sakā is confirmed by the inscription of throne bearers 15 (Sakā tigraxaudā) and 24 (Sakā paradraya on the royal tombs at Naqš-e Rostam) (Schmidt 1970: Fig. 44) and also by the figure of Skunkha on the relief at Bisotun (Boardman 2000: p. 106 Fig. 3, 27a; *here* Figure 74.2), all wearing the same headgear. Obviously the craftsmen in Persepolis identified this headdress especially with Eurasian peoples.

Sleeved jackets with fur applications as seams are worn by throne bearers 7 (Sugda), 8 (Uvārazmiš), 14 (Sakā haumavargā), 25 (Skudra) and, of course, again 15 and 24 (Schmidt 1970: Fig. 43–44). On the Bisotun relief Skunkha and two other rebels, the Median Fravartiš and the Sagartian Ciçantaxma, do not wear any shoes but tights with a leather strengthened sole as is known from original objects from the Altai region (Polos'mak 2001: pp. 110–112 Fig. 9–10; *here* Figure 55.7).

The gifts, which are offered by the members of delegations I, IX, XI, and XVI, are instructive: we recognize *anaxyrides*, *sarapis* and *kandys* (Schmidt 1953: Pl. 27, 35, 37, 42; *here* Figure 50.1, 55.2, 74.1). The costume of the delegations in question with exception of the *kandys*, which is not worn by the gift-givers themselves, corresponds with the presents and demonstrates the diffusion of the originally Eurasian costume through ample regions of the Achaemenid Empire. Differences only exist between the headgears. The Medians of the first delegation wear a *tiara* with flat upper part, similar to those shown on the Alexander mosaic (Pfrommer 1998: Pl. 5–8) and the Alexander sarcophagus (v. Graeve 1970: Pl. 56, 58–61).

Last but not least many dignitaries on the Persepolitan reliefs show the same riding costume, including the *kandys* (Figure 55.5, 94.6). On the head they do not wear the *tiara* of delegation I, but an upright cap, which in the friezes



Figure 74.2 Relief of Bisotun, Skunkha. Source: Photo B. Jacobs.

looks like a balloon (Schmidt 1953: Pl. 52; *here* Figure 55.5). A statuette of the so-called Oxus treasure provides the real shape of this headgear (Razmjou 2005: p. 171 no. 261). Similar to the original finds from the Altai the material of which this kind of cap should have been made is felt.

Traces of colors on the Persepolitan reliefs point to some kind of preference for painting the dresses red (Tilia 1978: pp. 31–69). The original finds from Altai demonstrate a similar taste; even the furs were colored red (Polos'mak 2001: p. 105).

The astounding parallels between the costume bearers of the Achaemenid Empire and of Eurasian steppe regions can be explained with a takeover of one costume, which is originally developed to fit the life habits of the riding nomads, by the resident population. Certainly the diffusion of this kind of garment over the Middle East was the result of a longer process from the eighth century BCE onwards. The depictions of inhabitants of the Achaemenid

Empire in Greek art of late archaic and classical times, however, lack any specification of difference between the dresses. Already Goldman (1993: pp. 53–54) assumed that the missing discernibility corresponded to a stereotypical convention of Greek artists in depicting the “barbarians”.

A painted wooden beam from a tumulus of the early fifth century BCE at Tatarlı in western Anatolia shows a cavalry battle (Summerer 2007: Pl. 2–18). Both sides wear the riding costume with *sarapis* and *anaxyrides* but without *kandys*; the headdress alone aims at differentiation: the victorious side wears the conventional *tiara* with a soft and flat upper part, whereas the defeated enemy is recognized by means of a conical *tiara* with a pointed top. Only the three leaders of the victorious side, all of them on foot, wear the Persepolitan court attire (Summerer 2007: Pl. 1–3, 9), and can thus be identified as Persians (Jacobs 2014: pp. 351–358).

The Great King also wears this same riding costume. Greek authors report the individual pieces of clothing, which distinguished the ruler from his surroundings: according to them, the king wore the upright *tiara* (*tiara orthé*) with diadem, a purple or apple-green *sarapis* with a white median strip, a likewise purple *kandys*, and, of course, tights and shoes (Jacobs 1994: p. 143).

Beside the *tiara*, a *kyrbasia* or a *kidaris* is often mentioned as the headgear of the Great King. The appearance of the *kidaris* especially is the object of debate among experts (Jacobs 1994: pp. 134–138; Tuplin 2007: pp. 67–97). Many modern scholars equate the *kidaris* with the crenelated crown in Achaemenid court art, although the classical sources strictly indicate that the *kidaris* were the prerogative of the Great King only. But there are persons other than the king who wore a crenelated crown in Persepolitan art. The sources also prove that the Great King wore the *kidaris* always in combination with the riding costume; the crenelated crown on the other hand is only attested together with court attire (Jacobs 1994: pp. 134–139).

Without doubt, the *kidaris* belongs to the ensemble of the riding costume, but this does not say anything about its shape. In addition, the classical sources cause confusion (Jacobs 1994: pp. 135–136 and Tuplin 2007: pp. 68–71 with critical analysis of the sources). The formulation of Curtius Rufus III 3, 19, *cidarim Persae vocabant regium capitis insigne; hoc caerulea fascia albo distincta circumibat*, allows for the interpretation that either a blue-white patterned diadem engirded the *kidaris* or that the *kidaris* surrounded the head as a blue-white patterned diadem. But the phrase *kyrbasia orthé* or *kidaris orthé* makes it more than likely that both terms are only different names for the *tiara orthé*. Tuplin offers the attractive assumption that the Semitic word *kidaris*/*kitaris* and the Persian *kyrbasia* could reflect synonyms of different languages for the same royal headgear (Tuplin 2007: p. 78). A solution to the problem is offered by a relief and an inscription on the stela of the Hellenistic Commagenian king Antiochus I from Sofraz Köy in central Anatolia: in the inscription the

ruler's magnificent *tiara* with luxurious decoration is called *kidaris* (Jacobs 1994: p. 136, 162 Fig. 8).

But until today the problem of identifying the royal headgear in Greek or Achaemenid art is not solved. It is true that on the Alexander mosaic Darius III wears an apple-green *sarapis* with a broad white mid strip, but his *tiara* does not look really upright. Furthermore, any diadem is missing (Pfrommer 1998: pp. 56–59 Pl. 5–6).

Classical sources and coin designs prove that the diadem was not the prerogative of the ruler. Titular kinsmen, called *syngeneis*, also wore a diadem surrounding the *tiara*. Different wearing methods of the diadem, which could be knotted at the neck or above the forehead, but also the absence of it, indicated social distinctions (Jacobs 1996: pp. 283–284). Varied favors by the sovereign may also have been marked by means of different colors of garments (Wiesehöfer 2010: p. 514).

The Court Robe

Women wore the same garment as men. This is valid for the riding costume as well as for the court robe. Women are depicted in this kind of clothing only in the minor arts, for example on cylinder seals. Sometimes the dress is combined with a veil, which is stretched over the head, and with a cloak, which is used like a cape. On some seals the women wear a crenelated crown like the royal headgear on the Persepolitan friezes (Özgen and Öztürk 1996: p. 117 Fig. 153). Llewellyn-Jones noticed that, in the so-called Greco-Persian glyptic, Persian women are wearing the so-called court vesture in everyday scenes which follow Greek iconographic conventions (Llewellyn-Jones 2010: pp. 165–176 Fig. 15.1–15.2; cf. the illustration in Boardman 2000: p. 172 Fig. 5.41). Maybe the conclusion must be drawn that this type of robe was well suitable for the household.

In the court art, which is concentrated on few residences of the empire, the Persians are distinguished from other people because they wear this court dress, which is most probably called *kypassis* in classical sources. Controversial discussion among scholars concerns origin, shape, and drapery of this robe (Jacobs 1994: pp. 125–134). In the course of an acculturation process of the indigenous Elamites and the immigrated Persians the *kypassis* developed to a common “national garment”, which, however, must be distinguished from the older cloak with fringes, illustrated on late Assyrian reliefs of the seventh century BCE and on a relief at Gate R at Pasargadae depicting a winged genius (Henkelman 2003: pp. 190–192; Henkelman 2011: pp. 577–634; illustrations in Stronach 1978: pl. 44–45). The *kypassis*, in contrast, consists of only one rectangular panel as already stated by Herzfeld (1941: p. 259). The

panel reaches in front and back from neck to ankle, and in width from wrist to wrist, while the arms are outstretched. In the middle of the robe a slot is placed (Jacobs 1994: pp. 128–130, 160–161 Fig. 5–6), so that the garment can be slipped over the head. The robe is girded in such a way that batches of the garment hang down loosely alongside the arms, so that the typical pseudo-sleeves and the bent horizontal folds in front of the body emerge (Figure 74.3–74.4), a drapery which is clearly visible at the statue of Darius from Susa (Curtis and Razmjou 2005: p. 99 no. 88; *here* Figure 94.8). Along the legs the front and back parts of the robe are sewn together. This is evident, because the lateral seams of the robes of dignitaries climbing stairs on the Persepolis friezes (Schmidt 1953: Pl. 132–135; *here* Figure 55.6) or on glazed bricks at Susa (Curtis and Razmjou 2005: p. 86 no. 50) are strictly closed.

As shown clearly on glazed bricks from Susa (Curtis and Razmjou 2005: pp. 87–88 no. 51–52), the *kypassis* consisted of a longitudinal panel of five woven zones, two of them monochrome alternating with three patterned ones, all of them bordered by seams. (Jacobs 1994: p. 129; *here* Figure 74.3–74.4). In Persepolis in a few cases traces of paint and incised drawing lines give an impression of an analogous pattern which once adorned the garbs (Tilia 1978: p. 54 Fig. 6, Pl. XXXIII Fig. 39–41). Similar garment patterns and coloration have been shown to exist on the *kypassis* of the man in the winged sun, who certainly represents Auramazdā (Tilia 1978: pp. 32–37 Pl. A–B). The lateral border of the *kypassis* of Cyrus on the reliefs of the northwest doorway to the hall of Palace P at Pasargadae showed metal applications (Stronach 1978: pl. 80–81; Jacobs 1987: Pl. 1, 1; *here* Figure 55.8).

On representations of the Great King his shoes do not show any shoelaces, whereas those of the court dignitaries are triple laced; on the Persepolitan reliefs some of the royal shoes show traces of red paint (Tilia 1978: pp. 56–57).

Court art at Persepolis, Pasargadae, Susa, Bisotun and Naqš-e Rostam presents the Great King exclusively clad with the *kypassis* (Figure 55.1, 3, 7, 8; 87.2; 94.4, 8); on the head he wears the crenelated crown, which, on the Bisotun relief, looks like a small circlet, decorated with rosettes (Figure 94.3) and which is otherwise formed like a cylinder or polos, also decorated with crenellations. At Persepolis this headgear was often provided with metal applications (Tilia 1978: Pl. 28; Schmidt 1970: pp. 99–100 Pl. 22, 33, 63; for the applications see Henkelman 1995–1996). Today the once popular theory of a well-discernible personal crown of each Great King in the court art is not accepted anymore (Jacobs 1994: pp. 134–139; Henkelman 1995–1996: pp. 275–279).

In rare cases also court dignitaries dressed in the *kypassis* show the crenelated crown, but more frequently they wear a kind of fluted hat (Boardman 2000: p. 86 Fig. 3.1), a kind of turban of opulent fabric covering also cheeks and chin (Curtis and Razmjou 2005: p. 68 No. 21, 71–72 No. 27,

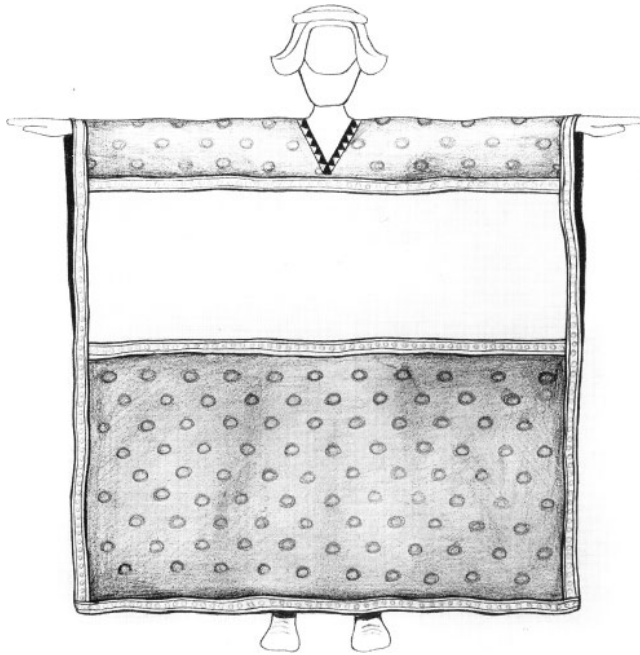


Figure 74.3 Drapery of court robe, not girded. Source: Reproduced by permission of B. Jacobs.

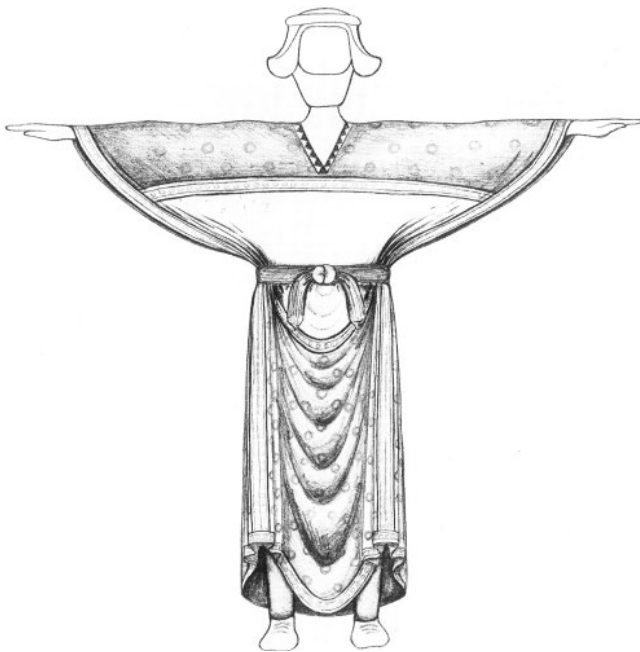


Figure 74.4 Drapery of court robe, girded. Source: Reproduced by permission of B. Jacobs.

28, 30), or a small circlet, often decorated with rosettes (Tilia 1978: pp. 66, 63–65 Fig. 10–11). The guards on the Apadana stairway reliefs (Schmidt 1953: Pl. 51; *here* Figure 94.7) and on the glazed bricks from Susa (Curtis and Razmjou 2005: pp. 87–88 Fig. 51–52) are endowed with a twisted ribbon around their heads.

The range of various headgears again indicated different functions and ranks. The same should be true for the court robe as well as for the riding costume as a whole. In both cases headgear, applications, and differences in color may have reflected graduations in the meritocratic court system (Jacobs 1996: pp. 273–275; Wiesehöfer 2010: p. 514).

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CHAPTER 75

Jurisdiction

Reinhard Pirngruber

According to the definition of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, jurisdiction denotes amongst other things the administration of justice and the exercise of judicial authority. As in any Ancient Near Eastern empire – suffice it here to mention the biblical story of Solomon (1 Kings 3:16–28) and the verdicts of Hammurapi engraved on his stele – the latter aspect was a royal prerogative as well as duty also in the Achaemenid Empire, bestowed upon the king by the gods, Auramazda in the case of the Achaemenids (see, e.g. Magdalene 2011: p. 175a). It is appropriate, then, to begin this contribution with a discussion of the role of the king in juridical matters and the nature of royal laws (*dāta*) before turning to the judicial competences of the king's representatives in the provinces, namely the satraps and their subordinates, various types of local judges. In this context, also the hypothesis of imperial authorization (*Reichsautorisation*) of regional law and norms, which has occupied a prominent role in scholarship for more than two decades by now, shall be briefly discussed. Finally, the particularly well-documented situation in Achaemenid Babylonia will then serve as an instructive case study of the dispensation of justice on the local level.

The King as Lawgiver and Judge

In several royal inscriptions, the Achaemenid kings refer to their “laws,” designated in the Old Persian language by the word *dāta*. A pertinent example occurs in Darius I's rock inscription at Bīsotūn: §8 of the Old Persian version

concludes with: “By the favour of Auramazda, these peoples respected my law” (translation Kuhrt 2007: pp. 141–158). Likewise, in DSe § 3, Darius refers to “my law that held them (firm)” (translation Kuhrt 2007: p. 491). Contemporary research unanimously agrees that in these and other instances in royal inscriptions (DNa § 3, DSe §4, XPh § 4d), *dāta* does not refer to a unified law code as had been postulated by Albert T. Olmstead in his posthumous *History of the Persian Empire* from 1948 (see Dandamaev and Lukonin 1989: p. 117). However, as to the precise meaning and semantic range of the word *dāta*, two fundamentally different (but mutually not exclusive) concepts have been argued for on the basis of different source groups. According to P. Briant (2002: p. 511), in the Achaemenid royal inscriptions the word “defines the overarching authority of the king’s rule” (Kuhrt 2007: p. 152) in ideological–political and also religious terms (especially in XPh) and thus does not belong to the judicial sphere proper. A similar stance is taken by J. Wiesehöfer (1999: pp. 66–67), for whom *dāta* is best interpreted as the overall principle that lies at the basis of and upholds the earthly and the cosmic order. Specifically implied thereby are the obligations of all of the king’s subjects to obedience, payment of tribute, and military service.

The case is different with the Old Persian chalque *dāta* in Elamite and Babylonian legal-administrative records and in the biblical books of Daniel, Esther, and Ezra (see the overview in Briant 2002: pp. 510–511). In these instances, *dāta* rather refers to concrete prescriptions and commands issued by the king. In Babylonia, for example, such royal decrees (*dātu ša šarri*) can be demonstrated to have stipulated (and at least tentatively unitized) the amount of fiscal and customs obligations, as well as of penalty payments. Furthermore, they also regulated business transaction involving deposits (Kleber 2010: pp. 60–61, who also makes the case for translating *dāta* as “law,” 51–2). The meaning of *dāta/dath* in the often-quoted passage from the letter of king Artaxerxes I to Ezra, which stipulated the Jews’ return from the Babylonian exile and the future administration of the province of Judah, is less clear. Ezra 7: 26 decreed the death penalty for transgressors against “the law (*dath*) of your God and the law (*dath*) of the king.” This juxtaposition of the two types of laws was interpreted in different ways, for example as referring to the king’s active support of Ezra’s fiscal and administrative reforms (royal laws) which had been drafted in accordance with the Jewish religious requirements (divine law) by J. Wiesehöfer (1995: p. 43). A different reading is favored by Briant (2002: p. 511; and quite similarly Frei 1995: pp. 7–8), arguing for an inclusion of the law of Ezra’s god – the Torah – into the royal laws, which was meant to constitute in the first place a protection against arbitrary interventions on the part of the satrap. A third approach by L. Fried (2004: pp. 212–213; covering an aspect also alluded to by Wiesehöfer 1995: p. 43) finally postulates that the judges to be installed by Ezra and which are

mentioned in the preceding line 7:25 shall exercise justice in accordance with both divine and royal law, hence relating the passage to the broader meaning of *dāta* primarily visible in Achaemenid royal inscriptions. All three approaches have something to commend to them, and luckily, the matter is less intricate in other biblical books, in the first place Daniel 2 and 6, where *dath* clearly refers to specific regulations issued by the king.

Transgressors against the earthly and cosmic order designated by *dāta* were penalized by the king in person, or at least this was claimed. The most famous instances in this regard are certainly the rebellions of the *magus* Gaumata and the successive liar-kings contesting the kingship of Darius I commemorated in the rock inscription at Bīsotūn (discussed extensively by Briant 2002: pp. 114–127), which describes in detail the gruesome fate of the unsuccessful pretenders to the throne if caught alive. Darius vaunts that having seized the Median Fravartish, “I cut off his nose, ears and tongue, and tore out one eye. He was held in fetters at my palace entrance; all the people saw him. After that, I impaled him” (DB § 32, translation Kuhrt 2007: pp. 141–158). Also the Sagartian Cicantakhma was mutilated and impaled (DB § 33), as were the followers of Vahyazdata in Persia (DB § 43). Impalement is the only death penalty for rebels against royal authority known from Persian inscriptions (Jacobs 2009: pp. 127–141, especially p. 134), and as such it also entered the Greek tradition, as shown for example by Ctesias’ account of the execution of the Egyptian rebel Inaros (Lenfant 2004: pp. 129–130). Greek sources also narrate further examples of death penalties ordered by the king (and in a broader variety as regards the manner of execution), for example because of cowardice in battle (Plut. *Art.* 14.2) or because of aspirations to secession (Hdt. 4.166). Usually, there is not mention of any kind of trial with such instances (examples in Klinkott 2005: p. 135).

There is some positive evidence that the king in person would act as a judge over his subjects: According to Hdt. 5.12, Darius was sitting in judgment (*prokatizō*) on citizens in a suburb of the city of Sardis in Lydia. Such direct involvement of the king in daily jurisdiction is also occasionally attested in legal and administrative sources, although he is usually represented by the satrap and the royal judges. The clearest textual witness is the cuneiform text BE 10: 118, a court record from the seventh year of Darius II, in which the king in person seems to settle a dispute in the city of Nippur concerning a dispossession of real estate: the four plaintiffs, four brothers, are explicitly said to address king Darius (¹*Da-ra-a-muš* LUGAL) with the complaint. Several Greek sources depict the king in his role as the highest judge, and attest to often severe punishment of judicial officials by the king: Sisamnes, one of the royal judges, was executed by Cambyes for bribery and his skin used to pad the judges’ seat as a reminder (Hdt. 5.25, further instances are collected in Klinkott 2005: p. 135 n. 16). Direct royal intervention is more frequently

encountered in form of regulations/laws issued (see the discussion of *dāta* above), and singularly in the order of Darius I found on the so-called “Demotic Chronicle” to collect and compile prevalent Egyptian laws (see most recently Agut-Labordère 2009). A final instance to be mentioned is the famous Passover-letter from the Jewish garrison on the Nile island of Elephantine (Kuhrt 2007: pp. 854–855; also Porten and Yardeni 1986: pp. 54–55, text A4.1) in which Darius II seems to authorize the observance of cultic laws that were potentially incommensurate with service obligations owed to the crown (Wiesehöfer 1995: pp. 41–42). Not only may this letter provide an interesting parallel to Ezra’s activities – especially if the stipulations were characterized as *dāta* (which is not found in the text, but note that the papyrus is severely fragmented), which would strengthen J. Wiesehöfer’s abovementioned interpretation of the passage – it also elucidates the judicial chain of command, as the king addressed his letter to the satrap of Egypt, Aršāma/Arsames, who in turn was to implement the royal order.

The Role of the Satrap

The highest representative of the crown in the province, the satrap was not only an important link between local communities and imperial administration, he was also in charge of maintaining order and justice in the province under his command (his juridical role is succinctly summarized by Klinkott 2005: p. 148). The daily routines of this office are best elucidated in the correspondence of Arsames, the satrap of Egypt under Artaxerxes I and Darius II (edited in Porten and Yardeni 1986: pp. 93–94), as well as in Babylonian cuneiform records from the Eanna-Temple in Uruk mentioning Gūbāru/Gobryas, satrap of Babylonia and Transpotamia, who was active from the reign of Cyrus into the first years of Darius I. The satrap’s judicial competences shall be discussed in more detail in the next paragraph.

Instances when the satrap was called upon to act as judge and settle disputes between different communities (rather than individuals) are known from documentary sources from several provinces in the empire: according to the Greek inscription SIG 134, Struses, the satrap of Ionia, decided on behalf of the king a border dispute between Miletus and Myus; the territory in question was given to the former city (Briant 2002: p. 495; Fried 2004: pp. 119–129). In a similar manner, the above-mentioned Arsames adjudicated at least partly in person the dispute between the Jewish community and the Egyptian priests of Khnūm in Elephantine after the latter had destroyed the temple of YHW, and he dealt in particular with the request of the Jews to rebuild the temple (see Briant 2002: pp. 603–607 on this conflict). According to the Aramaic papyrus A4.9 from the archive of Jedaniah (in Porten and Yardeni 1986: pp.

76–77; also Kuhrt 2007: p. 857), a representative of the Jewish community is to plead in person before Arsames for the rebuilding of the temple. Also a second papyrus, A4.2 (Porten and Yardeni 1986: pp. 56–57), from the same archive documents the judicial responsibilities of the satrap; in this letter, the Egyptians are accused of having offered bribes at the court of Arsames. An example of intra-community regulations laid down by a satrap is the trilingual inscription of Xanthus, again from Asia Minor (Kuhrt 2007: pp. 859–863). This text records the establishment of a cult for two Carian deities together with the installation of priests and further stipulations concerning the provisioning of the cult with land, cash, and the sacrifices to be offered. Whereas in the Greek version of the text Pixodarus, the governor of Caria and Lycia, appears simply as the judge to be appealed to in the event of discrepancies, the Aramaic version, which is the “official” one from the satrapal chancellery, presents the whole edict as *dāta/dath* written down by the satrap upon suggestions of the local community (Briant 2002: p. 707; see also the extended discussions in Briant 1998 and Fried 2004: pp. 140–154) – a telling testimony to the high authority of the satrap. This prominent judicial role of the satrap that can be gleaned from judicial and administrative records is not adequately reflected in Greek historiography. Most of the instances that have been adduced to such a purpose (see Klinkott 2005: pp. 141–145) hardly convey pertinent information, such as the story of the execution by impalement of the rebellious Milesian tyrant Histiaeus by his political rival and satrap of Sardis, Artaphrenes (Hdt. 6.30), or the support of an aristocratic *coup d'état* on Samos by Pissouthnes, the satrap of Caria (Diod. 12.27.3). The most informative category of texts concerning the judicial competences of the satraps, however, are legal and administrative documents from sixth century BCE Babylonia.

The texts quoted in the preceding paragraph have also been at the heart of the most prolific debate as regards the field of jurisdiction in the Achaemenid period, which evolved from Peter Frei's hypothesis of an imperial authorization of local laws by the Great King (summarized in Frei 1995). According to his definition, imperial authorization is

a process by which the norms established by a local authority are not only approved and accepted by a central authority but adopted as its own. The local norms are thereby established and protected within the framework of the entire state association, that is, the empire, as higher-ranking norms binding all. (Translation from German: Schmid 2007: p. 28)

Reactions to this idea have tended to follow disciplinary boundaries: Imperial authorization is generally accepted in Old Testament Studies, but the theory has met with criticism and been rebutted by ancient historians, who

found fault especially as regards the often somewhat forced interpretation of the sources. In the context of this debate, also the absence of an empire-wide law(-code) and especially the practice of dispensing justice on the basis of individual cases – under the key word of *Einzelfallgerechtigkeit* – have been emphasized (e.g. Wiesehöfer 1995; another important critique is Kuhrt 2001). A recent contribution quite sympathetic to Frei (Old Testament scholar K. Schmid 2007) has attempted to find some common ground between the diverging positions, and it remains to be seen whether the debate will gain fresh impetus from such attempts.

Local Jurisdiction: The Case of Babylonia

Overall, the cuneiform documentation from Achaemenid Babylonia shows that the satraps were an integral part of their respective province's legal structures. At the same time, in the texts culled from the archive of the Eanna-temple in Uruk, which is our main source on matters of day-to-day jurisdiction, the law cases were usually judged by subordinate authorities. With the exceptions of a couple of summonses from Uruk prompting persons to show up before Gūbāru in Babylon (Holtz 2009: p. 198), the satrap himself appears mainly in the background. His name is mentioned mostly in texts in which potential transgressors against a court decision or an order from the highest echelons of the temple administration are threatened “to bear the punishment of Gūbāru” (*hītu ša Gūbāru šadādu/zabālu*), which means that their case will be adjudicated by satrapal jurisdiction rather than by local courts (Kleber 2008: pp. 68–70, with an example text). Closely intertwined with the sphere of jurisdiction *stricto sensu* is the administrative level, on which Gūbāru is occasionally mentioned as a source of authority, too, and as such invested with the competences to adjudicate disputes within the temple and to initiate inspections of temple property. Relevant for our purposes are remarks in letters sent between temple officials such as “Supply them (i.e. the sender's messengers RP) with replacements for the workers who are dead, fugitive, or taken away (by others), or else I will tell Gūbāru about it so that an inspection is made” (Stolper 2003: p. 270; see also *ibid.* p. 266). Reluctant colleagues could thus be coerced into compliance by reference to the satrap. The Nabonidus Chronicle (iii 20) even raises the possibility that Gūbāru was in charge of investing officials in the province under his jurisdiction, which is of course reminiscent of the royal order to Ezra to appoint magistrates and judges in Transpotamia (Ezra 7:25). Note, too, that the phrasing of the passage is notoriously ambiguous, and it cannot be excluded that the appointment of Gūbāru by Cyrus is at issue here in the chronicle.

Also the “punishment of the king” (*lūtu ša šarri*) is occasionally evoked in texts from the Eanna. For the rest, the evidence of the Achaemenid king speaking justice in Babylonia is scanty. In addition to the legal record BE 10: 118 quoted above, there is a handful of private letters referring to the possibility of audiences before the king in Babylon. The writer of CT 22: 200 for example intends to discuss a matter before the crown prince, *mār šarri*, likely Xerxes, in Babylon.

As now regards actual jurisdiction, three different types of tribunals can be distinguished in Babylonia according to Oelsner *et al.* (2003: pp. 918–919): royal courts, local courts, and temple courts. They were usually presided over by one or more higher-ranking royal officials, most often the *sartennu* (conventionally translated as “chief judge”), the *sukkallu* (“vizier”), and sometimes the governor, the *šākin tēmi*. There is no clear-cut pattern as to which crimes were liable for punishment by satrapal or royal jurisdiction rather than by local authorities. In the royal court (*bīt dīni ša šarri*), the more severe types of crimes, such as treason or perjury, are usually thought to have been adjudicated (although the only process from Achaemenid Babylonia that can be shown to have been judged by the king in person (BE 10: 118) concerned some plots of real estate only; however, note the participation of Nebuchadnezzar II in a trial concerning treason, see Neumann 2007: p. 350). In them, a variable number – between three and eight, to be precise – of “royal judges” (*dayyānū ša šarri* and similar) dispensed justice, who stemmed from the ranks of local elite families and whose respective councils were organized hierarchically. Here, the Achaemenid Great Kings continued a tradition inherited from their Neo-Babylonian predecessors (see the overview provided by Holtz 2009: pp. 254–265). These royal judges need thus to be clearly kept apart from the rather elusive royal judges (*hoi basilēioi dikastai*) known from Greek and Hellenistic historiography recruited from and active in the immediate entourage of the king (Klinkott 2005: pp. 136–141). Local courts consisted of lay members of the urban notability (*mār banê*) gathered in an assembly (*pubru*), sometimes including the mayor (*haz-annu*) and further local officials. Although they were invested with at least a certain degree of adjudicatory power, the best attested role of the *mār banê* was passive in that they appear as witnesses to the plaintiffs’ statements but did not actively speak justice. In the temple court, finally, adjudicatory power lay with the temple authorities, in Uruk the *šatammu*, the *ša rēš šarri bēl piqitti* and the *qīpu*, the latter two being royal representatives within the local power structures. Frequent subject matters negotiated in these courts were the theft of temple property and fugitive slaves. Overall, it has to be conceded that in spite of the rather abundant documentation, the legal system of Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid periods is still rather under-explored. However, one cannot fail to notice a certain impact emanating from the

central administration on the province's realities. This is best visible in the not trivial amount of Persian loanwords entering the Babylonian language, some of which had a judicial background, and most prominently the office of *dātabarru* ("judge").

The main strand of archival documentation for Babylonia stops in 484 BCE with the suppression of the two revolts in the second year of Xerxes. The Late Achaemenid period is notoriously scarcely documented, with the main exception of the archive of the Murašû-family from the city of Nippur. In this archive, a broad variety of the title of "judge" is attested, often in combination with a water course. Most frequently, the title of "judge of the Sîn-canal" occurs, an office seemingly based on the principle of collegiality as usually three persons with this title appear in the same document. These officials usually bear Iranian personal names, which is indicative of a rather elevated position in the regional hierarchy. However, they are not once attested acting as actual judges (though of course this competence can neither be excluded), but their role in the documentation is confined to that of some kind of clerks in whose presence contracts were concluded (Stolper 1985: pp. 40–41).

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CHAPTER 76

Diplomacy

Silke Knippschild

Ambassadors, Arbiters, and Envoys

Starting with the personnel, it is necessary to highlight that the modern distinctions between diplomats applies only in a limited way to ancient diplomacy. I use the term ambassador for official messengers sent by one ruler or state to another with the mandate to undertake negotiations. Arbiters are third parties employed to facilitate negotiations between rulers or states. The term envoy designates persons facilitating diplomacy without themselves taking part in the transaction of diplomatic business, e.g. conveying letters between the parties.

Because of the nature of our sources, the most detailed accounts of diplomacy between the Achaemenid king, his subjects, and foreign powers are provided by Greek works. Persian sources such as the Persepolis Fortification Archives provide lists of rations and names of people traveling on official business without informing us of their purpose. In contrast, Greek authors provide narratives of negotiations, particularly for the periods of the Graeco-Persian and the Peloponnesian Wars, during which the Achaemenids played the warring Greek states off against each other by continually negotiating and making alliances with both sides. I will take the Greek sources largely at face value: for this paper it is not essential whether a certain event actually happened. The crucial point is that the description needed to be plausible to ancient readers and therefore reflected known practices. I will start by looking at sources from the Achaemenid Empire proper before discussing Greek accounts.

We are aware of a range of foreigners at the Persian court. These could be craftsmen, specialists, or subjects of the king receiving honors. In addition, we find people traveling to and from the court who received rations for themselves and their dependents. Abbatema the Indian is an intriguing character, traveling with a carnet de passage (*halmi*) on the king's roads from India to Susa with an elite guide (PF 785, 1317, 1318). He stayed in Susa for two months (PF 1558, 1704, 1785) before returning, again under the king's orders and with the same guide (PF 1556). His travel was authorized directly by the king and not at the point of origin, which is somewhat unusual – we encounter it e.g. with satraps traveling (Lewis 1977: p. 8) – and might be considered to point to Abbatema's position or rank. As mentioned above, the Persepolis Fortification tablets give particulars of Abbatema's journey, but do not offer the information we are looking for in our context. Was Abbatema a governor being ordered to Susa for supervision? Was he on the road for business or with a diplomatic mission? If the latter was the case, was he an envoy, an arbiter, or an ambassador?

Our Lycian sources provide a fuller picture and introduce an arbiter. A Lycian dynast functioned as judge in the negotiations between the satrap Tissaphernes and the Spartans (Kuhrt 2007: p. 339). They formed an alliance against Athens, set down on stelae in Hytenna, a Lycian city, and Caunus on the Lycian-Carian frontier, which is possibly the same as Thucydides 8.57–58. Because the Persians were playing Sparta and Athenians off against each other, the use of an arbiter to negotiate between the uneasy partners made sense. The inscription informing us of the arbitration was placed prominently on a tomb in the Xanthus acropolis, which may have belonged to the dynast Kheriga, with the text being inscribed at a later date by his son (Kuhrt 2007: p. 339). While the attribution of the tomb is still disputed, the placement of the text nevertheless indicates that the office of arbiter conveyed high status.

In order to get a fuller picture of diplomacy in Achaemenid Persia we have little choice but to turn to Greek literary sources, starting out with envoys. In this function, heralds conveyed letters and facilitated the conclusion of alliances, such as in the case of Polycrates of Samos. The tyrant sent envoys to Cambyses with the message that the king should request Samian support for his imminent Egyptian campaign (Hdt. 3.44). According to Herodotus, the aim of the tyrant was to rid himself of dissidents by sending them off to war as cannon fodder. Cambyses gladly complied and in his turn sent envoys to Polycrates, requesting his support. Accordingly, the negotiation via letters carried by envoys produced a mutually advantageous partnership: Cambyses received troops; Polycrates got rid of political enemies. Our source does not give further details on the heralds; frequently their work is simply referred to as a ruler sending to another ruler. Clearly, they carried letters without taking part in the negotiations themselves and were minor cogs in the machinery of diplomacy.

A further tale in Herodotus informs us about the diplomatic status of envoys. The Achaemenid kings employed envoys prior to their attacks on Greece. These heralds are of particular interest because of their fate, the reactions to that fate, and what these imply. The envoys carried the kings' messages, requesting the Greeks to send earth and water, symbols of vassalship (Darius: Hdt. 7.133, renewed by Xerxes: 7.32). The states that complied were spared by the Persians but were shunned as traitors by the other Greeks.

In contrast, Sparta and Athens killed Darius' envoys (Hdt. 7. 133–137). This was clearly considered a violation of international law (literally: the law of man) by both parties. As punishment, Athens endured the destruction inflicted on her by the Persians. However, Herodotus probably believed it to be retribution for the burning of the Kybebe temple at Sardis during the Ionian Revolt, supported by Athens, rather than retribution for the heralds (Hdt. 5.102). Sparta was said to suffer from the anger of the hero Talthybius, Agamemnon's herald, and could not obtain favorable omens from sacrifice. Dismayed, the Spartans resolved to send volunteers to Xerxes to be killed in expiation. Herodotus has the king refusing to comply and thus sink to the level of the Spartans by breaking international law. This action also insured that the Spartans were not absolved of their guilt; only when the envoys were killed on a later diplomatic mission was Talthybius' anger assuaged (Hdt. 7.137). Summing up, we encounter the practice of diplomatic immunity, recognized by international law, in Achaemenid diplomatic customs.

This story and similar reports below are also important in another respect. They highlight a red thread in Achaemenid diplomacy: the Great Kings tended to employ soft power (diplomacy, negotiation) before resorting to hard power (military intervention). In Greek sources such missions were usually met with rhetoric about staunch Greeks not bowing down before the Persian oppressor. States answering the soft power diplomatic approach by the Persians in kind and, for example, sending earth and water were characterized as weak traitors. Further, the use of soft power was often represented as a sign of weakness on the side of the Persians and of their fear of Greek hard power (e.g. Hdt. 6.9). However, the reason behind attempting to settle disputes by reason rather than by arms may well be as simple as attempting to avoid the cost of war in terms of manpower, arms, and the destruction of cities and countryside. In addition, it is good policy: subjects entering vassalship of their own free will are less likely to rebel than those conquered by force.

We now turn to ambassadors and Thucydides' report of the events of the winter of (probably) 525/4 BCE. The episode is especially relevant here, because we learn that at least some Greek states had access at short notice to translators competent in languages spoken in the Achaemenid Empire. While collecting tribute, the Athenian general Aristides came upon the Persian ambassador Artaphernes (Thuc. 4.50). Artaphernes was traveling by land to

Sparta, carrying with him letters in “Assyrian writing,” which in all probability refers to Aramaic. He was taken to Athens, where the letters were translated. The Athenians learned that the Great King had received a number of embassies from Sparta, which apparently all expressed different proposals. Artaphernes’ message was that the Spartans should decide what they wanted and send an ambassador back with him to convey it to the king. This opaqueness on the side of the Spartans may be based on their claim to be fighting the Peloponnesian Wars to free Greece from Athenian oppression. To be seen making treaties with the old archenemy and supposed oppressor Persia would have been difficult to justify and have caused upset. Athens now sent Artaphernes back with an embassy of her own. However, the diplomatic mission was abandoned when news of the death of Artaxerxes I, followed by political upheaval over the succession, reached them upon their arrival in Asia Minor.

Accordingly, dedicated ambassadors were undertaking diplomatic missions between the empire and its neighbors. Of course, these people were not professional diplomats in the modern sense. When we know the individuals involved on the Persian side, we often find satraps and vassal kings temporarily acting in this function. A further popular option was to make use of exiles from the states with which diplomatic negotiations were to be undertaken; because of their familiarity with the political situation, the customs, language, and culture of the other party they constituted an obvious choice. Similarly, multilingual subjects of the Achaemenid Empire played an important role in diplomacy. In addition, people outside the heartland of the empire who were under the influence or control of the king were acting for the court. Thus, the Macedonian king Alexander II made diplomatic overtures to Athens on behalf of Xerxes and his commander Mardonius during the Graeco-Persian Wars (Hdt. 8. 140), again employing soft power first.

However, a major part of diplomacy was undertaken *ad hoc*, when satraps or generals embarked on diplomatic actions and made truces in order to allow for the time necessary to get fresh instructions from home or to get a preliminary treaty ratified (e.g. Xen. Hell. 3.2.20). Direct contact between the negotiating partners normally took place at this level. To enter the presence of the Great King was a rare event for foreign ambassadors. A case of direct negotiation was the treaty arranged between the Great King and Sparta, represented by Antalcidas, who allegedly charmed the ruler (Plut. Artaxerxes 22.1, treaty Xen. Hell. 5.1.25 and 5.1.31).

The Conduct of Intercourse and Negotiations

Diplomats in Achaemenid Persia were able to draw on a number of facilitators, both in terms of persons and institutions. In addition, customary practices of establishing interstate relations were in place and could be employed to assist negotiations. I will now turn to some of the key components.

Travel to and from the Achaemenid Court

As we have discussed above, diplomatic negotiations were often undertaken spontaneously between, for example, satraps and Greek embassies or generals. Both parties would need to have preliminary agreements ratified by the relevant authorities. In the case of the satraps, that meant reaching the Great King. The speed and relative safety of travel on the royal roads were key factors enabling this system to work. The extensive network of royal roads with their supply stations based within a day's journey, on which embassies could travel with a *halmi*, enabled quick and efficient crossing of vast distances (Hallock 1969: pp. 40–42). The king, satraps or named high officials issued the *halmi* normally in Aramaic; without it, travel on the royal roads was not possible (Tavernier 2009: pp. 69–74).

In addition, the roads were used by foreigners or foreign embassies for whom escorts would normally be provided. Isocrates highlights that the Greek mercenaries stranded in Mesopotamia after the defeat of their paymaster and would-be usurper to the throne Cyrus travelled in greater safety than embassies on a friendship mission (*philia*, a political term signifying legally-binding personal or interstate relations, Isoc. 4. 148–149, see also Tuplin 1996: p. 157). This particular escort, led for part of the journey by the satrap Tissaphernes, was in fact ensuring that the Greeks caused no mischief and hindered their return as much as possible. Nevertheless, it demonstrates that escorting foreign travellers was common practice and fits in with the elite guides of the Persepolis Fortification tablets.

Protocol

Upon arrival at the court, diplomats wanting an audience with the king needed first to address the *chiliarch*, a second in command, who was a form of grand vizier (e.g. Nep. Con. 3.2–3). His duty was not only to establish contact with the king, but also to clarify the necessary protocols. This is an instance where we encounter the art of the diplomat: adopting court protocol regardless of potential personal distaste or refusing to follow it could make or break negotiations. One point of protocol, which frequently appears in Greek sources, is the *proskynesis*. While this prostration before the king was an established part of ancient Near Eastern protocol upon entering the presence of a ruler (Knippschild 2002: pp. 64–72), the Greeks considered it to be appropriate only toward gods, but not toward humans. Greeks such as Themistocles, agreeing to pay obeisance in order to gain access to the king, were accordingly portrayed as consummate diplomats (Plut. Them. 27).

Bridging Language Barriers and Diplomacy

Serious obstacles to establishing diplomatic negotiations were of course language barriers. As we have seen above, Greek states such as Athens had access to people capable of translating “Assyrian letters.” In this case, the translator’s service helped to thwart the diplomatic intercourse between the empire and Athens’ enemy Sparta, while also facilitating Athenian diplomatic overtures toward Persia.

Because the Achaemenid Empire was multilingual (Jacobs 2010), the courts kept interpreters on staff (Tavernier 2009: p. 62). The Persepolis Fortification tablets also demonstrate varying degrees of competence in the languages used, which would indicate that both native speakers and scribes learning the languages were employed (Henkelman 2008: pp. 87–89). These people provided a pool of facilitators for establishing diplomatic negotiations. The same applies to interpreters traveling with an army on the march (e.g. Xen. *Anab.* 1.2. 17 and 1.8.12).

Bilingual subjects facilitating negotiations occasionally appear by name in Greek sources, although they play only minor roles, which might indicate a status as objects of interest (e.g. Thuc. 8.85.2: Gaulites, a bilingual Carian. Xen. *Anab.* 1.2.17 and 1.8.12: Pigres). However, the names may simply appear to lend greater authority to the account.

Although professional interpreters were available, in situations when the king, his satraps or his officials were the ones seeking interaction with foreign powers, they often relied on ambassadors who possessed a certain familiarity with the addressees and spoke their language. To this end, the king and his satraps cultivated members of the subject population and citizens of foreign states who were in exile (e.g. Thuc. 8.6.1). We know of Greeks such as the former tyrant of Miletus, Histiaius, the Egyptian Udjahorresnet, or the Jews Ezra and Nehemia, to name but a few outstanding characters. The Athenian bad boy Alcibiades is a good example of an exile from Greece allying himself with the Persians (Thuc. 8.56.3–4). While these foreigners often remained at court for a limited time only, it is safe to assume that someone with the necessary language ability to handle a specific situation could be found at any given moment. One such case was the so-called Ionian Revolt, when the Persians drew on the deposed tyrants of the Ionian cities to offer an amnesty; only when negotiation failed did the king order the rebellion to be quashed. This is another case of soft power before the use of military force, as above.

However, the difficulty inherent in the employment of such people is clear. If negotiations with potentially hostile states were underway, employing an ambassador familiar with that state could be helpful. This is the case for Alexander II (above) who enjoyed the status of guest-friend and friend

(*proxenos te kai philos*, Hdt. 8.143) in Athens, giving him good standing and ensuring he would be heard. We will come back to the significance of guest-friendship below. However, the same familiarity may have led to suspicions of, or enmity toward, the diplomat. Causes for mistrust may be their very acting for the Achaemenids or the reasons why the Persians had access to them in the first place, applying especially to exiles such as the deposed Ionian tyrants. They could be considered *personae non gratae* or even outright traitors, which was liable to hinder their mission.

Xenia

Another form of diplomacy was based on the use of guest-friendship. While this was in itself a private institution, the persons linked by guest-friendship also put it to use in interstate diplomacy. We have seen one such case above, where Alexander II, *proxenos* in Athens, negotiated on behalf of the Persians. Also, the satrap Pharnabazus used the services of a mutual *xenos* as arbiter to establish diplomatic contact with the Spartan king Agesilaus, who was marauding in his territory, and negotiated a truce (Xen. Hell. 4.1.29).

As part of establishing and ratifying guest-friendship, the Graeco-Roman custom of exchanging tokens (*symbola*) to identify guest-friends and their descendants to each other crossed into the ancient Near East. For example, Athens declared King Straton of Sidon to be her *proxenos* and ordered *symbola* to be manufactured and exchanged (Dittenberger 1960: no 93). These were intended to authenticate and protect embassies between the two partners.

Dexiae

While the exchange of such tokens was usually a two-way process, the *symbola* called *dexiae* (literally right hands) were a unilateral form of diplomacy specific to the Persian Empire and its successors. The king sent these tokens, probably shaped like right hands, to authorize orders, as pledge, or as safe conduct (Knippschild 2004). Like the king's letters, they were valid, binding, and constituted a form of contract. However, they did not rely on the ability to read, the availability of an interpreter, or the royal seal. The sending and the receipt of *dexiae* therefore cut through diplomatic red tape and often appeared in life or death situations. Such a case was an amnesty given and authorized through *dexiae* by Artaxerxes II to some Persians who had supported his brother Cyrus' failed rebellion (Xen. Anab. 2.4.1).

Gifts

Gifts were used to establish or strengthen diplomatic relations without necessarily being linked to a particular diplomatic procedure or event. For example, the king of India sent a gift to Cyrus in order to establish political friendship (Xen. Cyr. 6.2.1). Similarly, the Achaemenid king and his satraps used gold or silver drinking cups as gifts conferring status, and creating and consolidating political relationships (Kistler 2010).

In the context of international (customary) law, the legal symbolic act of sending gifts signified a proposal to enter into an official relationship such as an alliance. When a state or ruler received such a gift from another state or ruler, receiving constituted another legal symbolic act and signified both parties entering into a binding contract (Knippschild 2002: pp. 103–120, 131–135). As a follow-up, a reciprocal gift would normally be sent to the initiator to confirm the bond. Once such a relationship was established, it was customary to continue exchanging gifts and letters between the parties to maintain good relations. Ceasing to write or to exchange gifts terminated these friendly relations.

In a diplomatic context, one key factor of gift giving was that it was not tied to status. The weaker party could instigate contact and send gifts, signifying a desire to enter into vassalship. This method was generally dependable, as accepting such gifts was required by customary law. The beneficiary's return could include granting a request, for example accepting the gift-giver as vassal and ceasing hostilities. Such gifts appear, e.g. in Herodotus 3.13, in the context of Cambyses' conquest of Egypt, which prompted the neighboring Libyans and Cyrenaeans to surrender without a fight and send gifts. Cambyses was pleased with the offers of the Libyans, but considered the 500 talents sent by Cyrenae too small. Nevertheless, adhering to international law, he accepted both offers and both states entered into vassalship.

However, we also find stories in which gifts were not used straightforwardly. Again, the historicity of the accounts is not a factor here; what matters is that the tales illustrate the potential pitfalls of diplomacy by gift and the room to manoeuvre this method of establishing relations offered. Examples appear in Herodotus with Achaemenid kings initiating international relations through gifts. Thus, Cambyses sought to deceive the wise Ethiopians by sending them gifts: his envoys were really spies scouting out the lay of the land prior to an attack (Hdt. 3.17–22). The Ethiopians were not deceived and in their turn sent Cambyses a gift: a mighty bow of war, highlighting what they thought of his idea of alliance. While gift exchanges were a reciprocal and positive method of initiating interstate relations, in Herodotus' account the king used the custom in a negative way in order to deceive, breaching international law and the laws of reciprocity. The Ethiopians replied by directness, undeceiving the king and re-establishing reciprocity in the process.

Herodotus reports a similar twisted gift exchange in Darius' dealings with the Scythians (Hdt. 4.127–132). In the account the king asked for water and earth (symbols of vassalship), which would be the customary Persian soft power approach. Instead he received a bird, a mouse, a frog and five arrows. Darius misunderstood the gift in his hubris to mean surrender; the Persian Gobryas interpreted correctly: unless they could fly into the sky like birds, burrow into the earth like mice, or dive into lakes like frogs, those arrows would pierce them – i.e. that attempting to conquer the Scythians was condemned to failure. Here, the king's directness is answered by indirectness, with the gifts of the Scythians signifying a state of war rather than friendship.

These tales are parables on the misuse of diplomatic customs and international law. False attempts to reach terms with foreign states and people are exposed; the collapse of diplomacy leads to misfortune and war.

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CHAPTER 77

Hunting and Leisure Activities

Eran Almagor

The hunt was perceived in the Greek view of the Persians as a diversion, parallel, in a way, to the private indoors amusements of the king in his court (cf. Plut. *Them.* 29.6). Accordingly, this chapter will be dedicated to the treatment of the hunt and other pastimes in Achaemenid Persia which we consider “leisure.” The latter section will address mainly recreational games. As the concept of “leisure,” in particular among pre-industrial societies, is especially hard to define (Toner 1995: pp. 11–21), a slightly open-ended definition can be adopted here (which covers playing), seeing it as a pastime that has to do less with the constraints of the mundane and more with a feeling of being in another world, engaged with freedom of choice on the one hand and chance or fantasy on the other. Naturally, our best information concerns the diversions of the king and his entourage among the aristocratic elite, whom the Greek authors knew better or at least found more interesting. This is a point where the nature of our sources dictates the presentation of a partial picture.

In the medieval poems of Manuchehri (d. c. 1040 CE) and Farrokhi of Sistan (d. 1037 CE), hunting is one of the most noble pastimes, along with drinking (feasting), playing Polo, or “presenting a flower” (Hanaway 1971: p. 22–3). This was also the way the Greeks understood this activity, as a sport reserved for the male elite (Barringer 2001: pp. 44–46). Addressing the importance of aristocratic pursuits in imperial Rome, Syme (1986: p. 72) draws a comparison between these pleasures and the amusements of the depoliticized nobility of the French *ancien régime* at the age of Louis XIV to construe the fascination with certain pursuits as a substitute pastime for

politics. Yet, as Lane-Fox (1996: pp. 121–122, 142) shows, this model is hardly applicable to periods of classical antiquity, certainly not in Greece, nor, we may add, in Achaemenid Persia. While the hunt involving the aristocrats at the time of the Achaemenid Empire was indeed a privileged activity enjoyed by the elite, it was certainly not devoid of political connotations, either in its royal or its satrapal forms (Llewellyn-Jones 2013: p. 130). Similarly, the hunt engaging the Great King, his court, or the nobility was not regarded as archaic or relevant to bygone times more than to the present political power structure, as the nostalgic and idealistic descriptions of authors such as Xenophon seem to understand the bearing of hunting to fourth century BCE Greece; instead, the activity was part and parcel of the current Achaemenid system and its ideology.

At a very early stage in the history of the Ancient Near East, it was considered one of the leader's established tasks to organize hunting campaigns in order to confront the threat of predators to the community (cf. Frankfort 1954: p. 78). Hunting was thus associated with the primordial conflict of civilized life against forces aiming to destruct it, mostly symbolized by the lion, and this struggle was assigned to the leader/king (Strawn 2005: pp. 141–150). The earliest large Mesopotamian stele, dated to the fourth millennium BCE (Iraq Museum, Baghdad, IM 23.477), introduces the theme with a portrayal of the assumed king of Warka/Uruk as two figures, one shooting an arrow and another throwing a spear at lions. In Mesopotamia there is a gap in the presence of this *motif* until the Neo-Assyrians (Strawn 2005: pp. 159 n. 148, 173–174). In the ideological representations of the Neo-Assyrian monarchy, the figure of the king struggling with lions was a favorite theme, as is evident in seals, inscriptions, and reliefs from the ninth century BCE onward. Well-known Neo-Assyrian examples are the royal hunt reliefs of Ashurnasirpal II (883–859 BCE) from Nimrud (northwest palace), and in particular the royal hunt scenes of Ashurbanipal (668–631 BCE) from Nineveh (north palace) (Albenda 1974). Indeed, it may be assumed that due to this privilege sport of the kings to hunt the lion, this animal gradually came to be associated in the east with regal power and authority (Cornelius 1989: pp. 58–59; Strawn 2005: pp. 152, 161, 174–184). The particular scenes of Ashurbanipal stand out among the images and reflect a staged hunting of lions within an arena. After almost 200 years in which this theme dominated idealized representations of royalty in the royal seals, it was re-enacted in front of an enchanted audience (Weissert 1997: p. 356; Reade 1998: p. 77). At the climax of the event the king stands face to face with the lion and stabs it with his sword (BM 124874; AO 19903 [Louvre]: spear).

As is well known, the hunting *motif* in Achaemenid Persia, the successor empire of the Neo-Assyrians, is notoriously absent from the representations of the Great King in the palace reliefs, a surprising fact given the iconographic

influence the Neo-Assyrians had on Persian imagery (Porada 1965: p. 162; Cremer 1984: pp. 92–95). This gap is not only due to the current state of our archeological finds, since the *motif* is conspicuously missing in the royal inscriptions as well. Since the hunting image was so prominent elsewhere, it is understandable why Greek authors wanted to find it in the Achaemenid royal inscriptions. Onesicritus (cited by Str. 15.3.8) read the writing on Darius I's tomb as saying "as hunter I prevailed." But this is either a misapprehension of the interpreter or a purposeful Greek embellishment (cf. Schmitt 1988: p. 29). One may say that the hunting theme was deliberately suppressed in the royal Achaemenid iconography and this may give us a clue as to the way hunting figured in the image the Great King projected of himself in the east, and to Median and Elamite audiences in particular. We may not know the attitudes evoked by the Neo-Assyrian royal hunting images among the Medes and the Elamites, but some scholars believe that soldiers of the grand coalition that conquered Nineveh in 612 BCE defaced some of the reliefs: in two cases at least, there seems to be a deliberate attempt to "free" the lions from the royal fatal grip (BM 124886: lion's tail is chopped, as if to set it loose; Curtis and Reade 1995: no. 28–29. Cf. the mutilation of Ashurbanipal's hands stabbing the lion in BM 124874). Whether this has any relevance to the suppression of the hunting scenes in the Achaemenid royal palaces is hard to tell, but there are no echoes of the staged lion hunting in Persian reliefs. This has to be qualified with respect to the Persepolis reliefs on doorways, showing a figure combating animals, including lions (Root 1979: pp. 81–82, 102–103, 107; Schmidt 1953: pls. 114–117, 146, 144–146, 147 A, D, 195–196). The position of the hero stabbing a lion is similar, albeit in adapted form (Root 1979: pp. 304–308), to that of the Assyrian stamp seals (e.g. BM 84672; Sachs 1953) and the hunting reliefs of Ashurbanipal. The figure in all these reliefs is not immediately seen as the Great King (strapped shoes and his low headband: Root 1979: p. 304; Kuhrt 2007: p. 546; yet, see Wiesehöfer 1996: p. 24), and may be a hero, symbolizing the "Persian man," of whom the ideal representation was the king (Root 1979: pp. 305–307; cf. DNa 43–47). The depiction of a combat with animals is interpreted as having apotropaic significance (Strawn 2005: pp. 147–148, 216–18, 221–6). So even when the hunting iconography is adopted in the palace, it is cast in a more general form that does not trigger an instant connotation of royalty.

As opposed to the absence of hunting scenes, however, we do find the hunting theme on numerous seals. Of note is a royal seal of Darius I aided by Ahura Mazda (as a figure in a winged disk), in a chase against a charging lion, shooting arrows while stationed on a chariot (BM 89132; cf. Metropolitan Museum of Art, accession no.1984.383.25 for the posture). The point of origin of the seal is said to be in the west, in Thebes in Egypt. Eastern seals contain more of the image of a combat between the "royal hero" and lions or

fantastic beasts, evoking the heroic clash of the Persepolis door jambs, even though the royal figure is clearly marked and recognized by his headgear (Frankfort 1939: pl. XXXVII h, m, n; and more types in Schmidt 1957: pls. 2–5; cf. Kuhrt 2007: p. 596 on Artystone’s cylinder seal, PFS 38). In fact, there is a conflation between the royal hunter image and that of the “royal hero,” perhaps because of the ideological emphasis on bravery in both cases. Thus, we have iconographically ideal scenes in the seals, of lions and griffins rearing on hind legs (Briant 2002: p. 232; cf. BM 89549 and BM 134761; cf. an impression of a cylinder seal from Persepolis, PFS 7*: winged bulls). Echoing the hunting motif of the Neo-Assyrian reliefs is a gold scabbard overlay of the fifth or fourth centuries BCE (Allen 2005: p. 98; but see Boardman 2006) from the “Oxus Treasure” (BM 123923), which was presumably presented as a votive offering. It is decorated with an embossed hunting scene of a lion by two mounted figures. From the fourth century BCE comes the lekythos of Xenophantos (St. Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum Π1837.2, St. 1790) with Persians hunting boars, deer, a griffin and a lion-griffin, on foot, on horseback, and from a chariot (cf. Franks 2009; Spawforth 2012: p. 192). Also from the west, but in Asia Minor, Persian mounted hunters are illustrated on the so-called “Greco-Persian” gems of the fifth and fourth centuries BCE, which display images of non-royal Persian hunts of lions (Boardman, 1970: pp. 306, 309, 314, 316–8 with accompanying plates). Some subjects return to the Persian iconography of the seals (Boardman 1970: p. 306, pls. 838–842), while others have scenes of real hunting (e.g. BM 120326 = Boardman 1970: pl. 927; cf. Irdabama’s cylinder seal, PFS 51). These artifacts, dated to the fifth century BCE, may display a different sort of importance given to the hunt, “tainted” by the Greek images of individual pursuit and competition among the noble “equals,” since the artists on the gems were Greeks, employed by Asian patrons (Boardman 1970: pp. 304, 323–326). There are also coins from the west with Persian hunting themes (Briant 2002: p. 715). Hunting friezes were common on funerary monuments in Asia Minor from the fifth century BCE, and continued after Alexander, when the Greco-Persian hunting motif in sculpture and painting was fully adopted in Macedonia (Anderson 1985: pp. 70, 78–79; Lane-Fox 1996: pp. 138, 142; Barringer 2001: pp. 201–2; Palagia 2000: pp. 167, 175–184, 191–199).

Some Greek texts describe paintings of hunting scenes in Persia. They highlight the hunting iconography as a royal activity. For instance, Diodorus dwells on Semiramis’ palace in Babylon (2.8.6–7), in all probability a portrayal taken from Ctesias (*FGrH* 688 F 1b), and describes colorful painting representing a hunt of wild animals: the queen on horseback hurling a javelin at a leopard and king Ninus driving a spear into a lion. Briant (2002: p. 207) is persuasive in suggesting that these descriptions may reflect the scenes of pre-Achaemenid

palaces (cf. Ammianus Marcellinus on the local “paintings,” 24.6.3, i.e. Sasanian), or even more probably, echo Achaemenid seals. The Anatolian Ctesias may have even interpreted the iconography of the door jambs in Persepolis as the hunting scenes of individualized prominent figures, and assigned it to the royal hunt.

Though the seals are very useful in fathoming the image of the Achaemenid hunting practice and the significance given to it, textual descriptions from classical antiquity are still our main guide to this activity. Yet, these depictions should be employed with caution, not only with regard to particulars but also with respect to the values assigned to the practice: at some points, they reflect Greek rather than Persian belief and value systems (cf. Anderson 1985: p. 68 on the *Cyropaedia*). Even descriptions that ultimately go to the high Hellenistic period can be used to throw light on the Persian hunt, because Achaemenid hunt almost certainly influenced the Macedonian pastime. Here another *caveat* is in place, since the Macedonian lion hunting was probably known before the war with Persia (See Hull 1964: pp. 101–102; Anderson 1985: p. 80; Briant 1991; Lane-Fox 1996: pp. 137–139, 143), even though certain details of the practice and protocol were borrowed from the Persians (Spawforth 2012).

Our Greek sources describe the hunt either as taking place in open spaces (Xen. *Cyr.* 1.4.7–9, 14, 16–24 and *Anab.* 1.9.6) or practiced in a controlled environment of a confined park, especially designed for this sort of activity, and which is called *paradeisos* (a loanword from OP **paridaida*, “enclosed space”; Hinz 1975: p. 179; Kuhrt 2007: pp. 2.510–511). In an important study, Tuplin (1996: pp. 80–131) addresses the nature of the allusions to *paradeisos* in the texts, as well as the Elamite version *partetaš* (found in the Persepolis tablets) seemingly connected with it. Tuplin’s study does show that this link was not exclusive and that the nature of the parks varied. *Partetaš*, signifying a closed space, is used of a storage place (PF 144–158; cf. PT 48, 49, 59, 1963:9) or even a place with a proper name (PF 158; 1815:6). It is not mentioned in the context of hunting, and this reflects the fact that the gardens were used not solely as game reserves. The parks are known especially from the Neo-Assyrian period but go back even further in time (Wiseman 1952: p. 27–8, 30, lines 38–48; Wiseman 1983: p. 138–9; Novak 2002: pp. 445–446). The Achaemenid employment of a word signifying a closed space to refer to the parks that were adopted from the Assyrian practice was not universal, and the uses of these parks varied (Diod. 19.21.3; Arr. *Ind.* 40 with Tuplin 1996: pp. 97, 110, 121, 124). Yet, one should note that very quickly the notion came to designate the parks, and this is the meaning carried by the term *paradeisos* when it entered different languages, from Hebrew (Song of Songs 4:13, Nehemiah 2:8: *Pardes*) to Greek. Xenophon is the first to use the word (*Anab.* 1.2.7, 9, 1.4.10, 2.4.14, 17; *Cyr.* 1.4.5, 11, 8.1.38, 8.6.12), but only glosses it in a later work (*Oeconomicus* 4.13). It would appear that

Xenophon assumes his audience knows the significance of the word, and this may be due to its appearance in a popular written text. The probable candidate for such a work is Ctesias' *Persica*, which seems to have mentioned gardens at various points (F 1b 2.13.1–3; F 34a [*paradeisoi*], 34b [*basilikos paradeisos*], F 45.35 [*kepoi*]).

As evidence for their social and ideological importance (Briant 2002: pp. 201–2), the parks were spread across the empire (cf. Xen. *Cyr.* 8.6.10–12), with their functions repeated by satraps in other centers, such as Sardis (Plut. *Alc.* 24.7–8; Xen. *Oec.* 4.20–25), Dascylium (Xen. *Hell.* 4.1.15–17) or Celaenae (Xen. *Anab.* 1.2.7) in Asia Minor. The replication of the parks went hand in hand with the adoption of an aristocratic lifestyle in which hunting played an important role. Some of the *paradeisoi* were therefore extremely large (that in Celaenae contained Cyrus the Younger's army of nearly 14 000 men: Xen. *Anab.* 1.2.9; Tuplin 1996: pp. 99, 102, unjustified in claiming this “unhelpful”; cf. Curt. 8.1.19 on Alexander's army in Sogdiana's park). It is important to note that the parks were not only used as grounds for hunting or killing animals. Our sources give the impression that another important aspect of the parks was taking care of the *flora* growing in them (Xen. *Anab.* 1.4.10, 2.4.14). Xenophon (*Oec.* 4.13–14) describes the gardens as places where the king spends his time, but focuses on the trees and produce of the land (cf. Diod. 16.41.5).

The hunt's frequency, according to Xenophon (*Cyr.* 1.2.9), was “many times a month.” On going hunting, he continues, the participants carry along a moderate meal (*ariston*), which may supply provisions for two days, until they kill the game and then eat it. Select animals were collected and brought to the parks (cf. Ael. *Anim.* 13.18 [from Ctesias?], Curt. 8.1.11–12). Presumably, the animals were amassed mainly for game (Xen. *Cyr.* 1.4.5; *Anab.* 1.2.7); some were perhaps kept as pets or in a zoological garden as well, like in the Assyrian gardens (Wiseman 1952: lines 95–100; Curtis and Reade 1995: no. 26 on BM 118914 [“pets”], cf. Frankfort 1954: p. 186; cf. Tuplin 1996: pp. 80–88, esp. 85 and n. 19). The animals were fed and held in choice groups (cf. Plut. *Alex.* 73.6), and then freed in the premises during the hunt (cf. BM 124886–124887), if our texts as well as the Neo-Assyrian reliefs can be combined to present the complete picture. Lions were apparently not the only beasts hunted. Game animals included leopards, boars, bulls, bears, deer, gazelles, wild sheep, and wild asses (Xen. *Cyr.* 1.4.7). Hunting of birds is also mentioned (Xen. *Hell.* 4.1.15–16). Hound dogs were employed by the hunters to attack the prey, as in Greece (Shahbazi 2004, Assyrian reliefs: BM 124893, 118915, 124862–124863, probably the large mastiffs: Kawami 1986: p. 262; Hull 1964: pp. 21, 29–30). Seal impressions and gems have dogs, either separately or in pairs, attacking boars, stags, lions, and leopards (Boardman 1970: pls. 885, 886, 887; cf. Hdt. 1.192). Traps are known to

have been used in the hunt (cf. Polyæn. 7.14.1 on Tiribazus), as were nets (Neo-Assyrian reliefs: BM 124899, BM WA 124871). Even a practice of “nets” of people holding hands together (cf. Hdt. 6.31) is said to have been employed (Briant 2002: p. 298). Xenophon mentions hunting in collaboration, and chasing at relays (*Anab.* 1.5.2). Another means was the lasso (cf. BM 124874, lower register). Yet, the most frequent weapons used in hunting were bow and arrows, which Xenophon relates (*Cyr.* 1.2.9) must be taken by those who go hunting with the king, together with a short sword, a light shield, and two spears (one to throw, the other to use in close combat; cf. *Cyr.* 1.2.13). He also mentions (*Cyr.* 1.2.12) that there were archery (and presumably spear hurling) competitions engaged by youths who practiced in these arts since they were boys (cf. *Cyr.* 1.3.15).

The social and educational significance attributed to the Achaemenid hunt might project Greek (oligarchic) ideals, yet it should be mentioned. According to the work attributed to Plato, *Alcibiades* 1, 121e–122a, the military education included horsemanship and hunt (for seven-year-old boys), and was also aimed at inducing courage (age fourteen). Xenophon (*Cyr.* 1.2.10, cf. 1.2.8) openly explains the rationale for this connection. If Xenophon’s description of young “Cyrus” attending his grandfather Astyages in a hunt, together with other adolescents (*Cyr.* 1.4.14), can be relied upon, these were apparently occasions for the young nobles’ initiation into the adult world and may be the peak of the youths’ training (cf. Str. 15.3.18; Hdt. 1.136). Hunting was a means to forge social bonds between those involved (Allen 2005: p. 99).

The royal hunting party was significant for the aristocracy in a different way. It was one of the highlights of court life (Briant 2002: p. 297). The most loyal of courtiers received the honor of accompanying the king on the hunt. Themistocles, although Greek, was honored as an equal to high ranking Persians by being invited to the hunt (Plut. *Them.* 31.3). Even royal concubines were in the king’s entourage (Athen. 12.514c, Heracleides). It was a great honor for members of the aristocracy not only to participate in the hunt but also to take care of several of its facets (Llewellyn-Jones 2013: p. 131). There were special officials, whom the author of the treatise *De Mundo* (398a) calls “curators of war and hunting” (cf. Ael. *Anim.* 13.18: “royal superintendents,” *hoi meledones hoi basileioi*). The royal Achaemenid hunt had a particular place in the royal ideology, as can be gleaned from our sources. We have two (presumably ultimately contemporary) literary descriptions which shed light on the importance placed on the Persian monarch’s bravery during the hunt as crucial for the legitimacy of his reign. In a letter to the Spartans (Plut. *Art.* 6.4), Cyrus the Younger mentions the inability of Artaxerxes, his brother, to sit right on his horse while hunting. The item is meant to indicate his weakness and cowardice (*deilia kai malakia*). In contrast, the portrayal of Cyrus found in Xenophon’s *Anabasis* casts the prince as “the fondest of hunting and

of incurring danger in his pursuit of wild beasts" (1.9.6). Similarly, regarding a hunting scene of Alexander fighting with a lion, Plutarch (*Alex.* 40.4) describes a Spartan ambassador exclaiming: "Nobly, indeed, Alexander, hast thou struggled with the lion to see which should be king." (Perrin trans.) These pictures find their echo in descriptions from Neo-Assyrian inscriptions which display an almost heroic involvement of the king in killing animals during the hunt, sometimes with his own hands. Ashurnasirpal II claims to kill no less than 450 great lions and 390 wild bulls (cf. Wiseman 1952: lines 86–94; Luckenbill 1926–1927: i.85–86 nos. 247–248 [Tiglath-Pileser I]; Strawn 2005: pp. 163–165). The *motif* continued in the time of Alexander; the Macedonian king supposedly killed 4000 wild animals (Curt. 8.1.19), Lysimachus slayed a huge lion (*ib.* 8.1.15; cf. Justin, 15.3.7–8), Perdikkas seized lion cubs from a lioness in a cave (Ael., *VH* 12.39). Because of the importance given to the hunt, a supposed absence of this practice was perceived as suggestive of the monarchy's decline and corruption (cf. the end of the *Cyropaedia* on the avoidance of hunting: 8.8.12).

The Great King is usually depicted as hunting mounted on horseback (Hdt. 3.129; cf. Arr. *Anab.* 4.13.1; cf. Gabrielli 2006: pp. 14–15). Xenophon (*Anab.* 1.2.7) writes that Cyrus the Younger partook in this activity "when-ever he wished to give himself and his horses exercise." Other descriptions, however, have the king riding in a chariot (Spawforth 2012 on Ephippus *FGrH* 126 F 5.), as one can see in the Neo-Assyrian reliefs (BM 124532, 124851: men drive the king's chariot against bulls and lions; cf. 124858; Weissert 1997: p. 340 on the *motif*), as well as in the Achaemenid seals (BM 89132, Frankfort 1939: pl. XXXVII, n). Presumably, this image was designed to evoke a comparison with a military engagement, but also to set the king apart from the rest of the participants. Several measures ensured his honored position was highlighted. According to the protocol used in the royal hunts, the king reserved the right to cast the first spear at the beast (Xen. *Cyr.* 1.4.14). Ctesias' story of Megabyzus (F 14.43) illustrates this custom. It relates that on a hunt with Artaxerxes I, the Persian courtier struck a lion with a javelin as soon as it leapt. The act infuriated Artaxerxes because Megabyzus killed the animal before he could do it, and so he ordered that Megabyzus be beheaded (cf. Plut. *Mor.* 173d, which erroneously attributes the opposite measure to Artaxerxes I; cf. Briant 1994: pp. 309–310; Kuhrt 2007: p. 315; Almagor 2018: p. 275). The courtier's violation of the protocol code has cast doubt on the royal image linking hunting, bravery, and legitimacy. This court protocol was presumably kept in the practice of Alexander's royal hunts, as can be seen in two stories. In the first, in Bazeira, 328 BCE, Lysimachus attempted to throw a spear at a lion before Alexander but was reprimanded by the Macedonian king (Curt. 8.1.14–8.1.17; Plut. *Demetr.* 27. 3; Spawforth 2012: p. 189). In the second, Alexander had the royal page Hermolaus flogged for

hitting a boar before him (Arr. *Anab.* 4.13.2), causing Hermolaus' rebellion (4.13.3–4.13.7, 4.14.2, cf. Plut. *Alex.* 55; Curt. 8.6.7–8.8.21). In the last case, the form of the hunt adopted from the Persians seems to reflect a different significance from the one attached by the Macedonians to the practice (cf. Athen. 1.18a; Briant 1994: pp. 305–307).

The king was actually particularly vulnerable during the hunt, and these occasions also display the important role of the relationship between the king and his court nobility. Accompanying the king were attendants who probably acted as his bodyguards. A beast possibly nearly caused Artaxerxes II's death during a hunt (Plut. *Art.* 5.3): the king's garment was rent, and the reader is left to conclude that this was done by the animal (presumably a lion: Almagor 2009/2010). In a passage from Diodorus Siculus (15.10.3), the courtier Tiribazus tells his judges that once in a hunt he had saved Artaxerxes' life from charging lions. It is probably the same scene. Thus, contrary to the protocol code mentioned above, we have stories that show that courtiers who aided the king in the face of peril during the hunt were welcomed and could be rewarded (cf. Xen. *Anab.* 1.9.6). Sometimes, it was the attendants who proved to be perilous. Greek descriptions include some stories of assassination attempts in these occasions by persons close to the king. The assassination of Smerdis occurs during the hunt (Hdt. 3.30). Compare Aelian (*VH* 6.14) on an unsuccessful plot directed against Darius I during a hunt. Other risks involved in the hunt pertain to the king as a horse rider (*Cyr.* 1.4.7–1.4.8; Xen. *Anab.* 1.9.6). Darius I is said to jump from his horse too quickly during a hunting expedition and to severely twist his foot (Hdt. 3.129). Later on, Lysimachus has his left shoulder almost torn off (Curt. 8.1.14–8.1.16).

Some domestic leisure pursuits at the court involved weapons and might have been just as lethal. Ctesias (F 13.14) tells us of Cambyzes, who, while passing the time (*diatribes charin*) carving a twig with a large knife, accidentally cut his thigh and died 11 days later. Other popular pastimes, however, were seemingly less dangerous. Foremost among them was the casting of dice. A famous game between the Persian king and his mother, Parysatis, becomes lethal as they gamble on a eunuch's life (Plut. *Art.* 17; Ctes. F 16.66). The nature of the game is not clear, except that it includes dice. The apparently earliest dice in the Iranian plateau traveled from India (Dales 1968: pp. 18–19). Plutarch's description interestingly resembles the famous stake game in the great Indian epic *Mahābhārata* (composed between the fourth century BCE and the fourth century CE). Here as well we note a game where the stakes are raised with every defeat (2.51.1–2.52.35; Gupta and Ramachandran 1976: p. 54; Soar 2007: p. 177). Dice are also used to determine fates in the famous story of the Book of Esther (3:7). Herodotus (3.128) also tells us of an instance where Darius I has his courtiers cast lots, from whom Bagaeus was chosen for a mission against Oroetes. It is not clear how the game was decided

in that played between Parysatis and Artaxerxes II (see Held 1935: pp. 264–277; see options in Lamar 1927). Yet, one aspect we should note is that the queen mother lets her son win and that she “endeavors” to do so (Plut. *Art.* 17.5). Unless this description alludes to fixed dice (cf. in the *Mahābhārata* 2.53.3), it may point toward another element in the game besides luck, namely, some form of a race (board) game (cf. Daryaee 2002: pp. 281–2). Later literary and visual representations depict Persian aristocrats playing a board and dice game, an early version of backgammon. The story of its invention is narrated in the Middle Persian text of *Abar Wizārišn ī Čatrang ud Nihīšn Nēw-Ardaxšīr* (“On the Explanation of Chess and Invention of Backgammon”), which probably goes back to the sixth century CE (reign of the Sasanian king Khosrow I; Brunner 1978). The tale relates the beginning of the game to the invention of the Persian minister Bozorgmehr (Buzurgmihr), as a reciprocal challenge to the one posed by the Indians to the Persian king (Daryaee 2002: pp. 283, 287–289). The name Bozorgmehr gives to the game, so the story goes, commemorates Ardashir I (180–240 CE), the first king of the Sasanian Empire: it is *Nēw-Ardaxšīr* (“Noble is Ardaxsir”), in short, *Nard*. Ferdowsi elaborates the story in the *Shahnameh* to credit Burzoe with the invention of the game, as a response to the introduction of chess by the Indian raja visiting the Persian court (Murray 1952: pp. 54, 114–115). The fact that Artaxerxes, and Parysatis’ game results in the removal of the king’s confidants may sardonically refer to a game that entails the removal of pieces (a variant of backgammon).

Lastly, there may be evidence for another game from Achaemenid times, though admittedly slim. While an explicit reference to the forerunner of the modern polo game, by the name of *čōwgan* (= “mallet”), mentioned again by Ferdowsi (with Shapur, son of Ardashir, as a player) is missing, there may be an allusion to it in the third century CE Greek version of the “Alexander Romance” of Pseudo-Callisthenes (1.36; Crowther 2007: p. 21). Here a story is told of the gifts sent by Darius III to the Macedonian king upon the latter’s assumption of power, and they included a leather thong (*skytos*), a ball (*sfaira*), and a chest. The whip is to show that he still needs discipline and the ball that he should play with his own age group. According to the story, Alexander replies to Darius that he receives the gifts as a good omen: the thong to mean that he will thrash the barbarians, the ball that he will master the spherical world. In the Arabic and Persian versions the ball seems to refer to the game of *čōwgan* (Casari 2012: pp. 187–190). After this date, the story became popular, and can be found in the history of Al-Tabari as well (Gad 2012: pp. 220–221). It may echo folkloristic tales that circulated in Achaemenid times, but more probably it derives from the post-Achaemenid period and was simply imputed backward in time. So, while an attractive theory, the nobles of the ancient Persian Empire probably did not play the polo game as a pastime (Knauth 1976: p. 48), and it was introduced by the Parthians.

Herodotus says of the Persians (1.135), “they practice all kinds of enjoyments,” and although he does not specify all of these luxurious practices in this passage, he does go on to describe them as “borrowed” (*punthanomenoi*) from other peoples (especially pederasty, which the Persians learned from the Greeks). This chapter has reviewed Persian leisure pastimes also in comparison with pursuits found in other societies, in particular the traditions of the Persian’s Near Eastern imperial ancestors, the Neo-Assyrians, and against an Indo-European background, known from depictions from the Indian subcontinent. For all of these activities, only Greek texts provide us with a narrative, and while employment of these textual descriptions should be done with caution, they do reveal a layer of reality that otherwise would have been lost, as leisure falls in a gray area between ideological self-representation, ethnographic depiction, communal stratification, belief and value systems, and inter-social interactions. Hence a relatively straightforward leisure pursuit at one period becomes a complex play with fragmentary evidence for future scholars.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to express my gratitude for Bruno Jacobs and Robert Rollinger for their kind invitation to participate in the volume. Many thanks to Arthur Keaveney and Elnathan Weissert for their comments on several sections of this chapter.

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CHAPTER 78

Gender and Sex

Irene Madreiter and Kordula Schnegg

Theoretical and Methodical Considerations

“The social organization of the relationship between the sexes,” as Joan W. Scott (1988: p. 28) points out, is much more complicated than one usually imagines. It may be organized on the basis of various and differentiated criteria, such as age, ancestry, or physical characteristics. Indeed, based on ideas about “health” and “sickness,” or “normal” and “abnormal,” as well as on opinions about physical differences between men and women, one’s physique acquires a structuring character. Furthermore, the fact of dividing human beings exclusively into two apparently complementary sexes has proven an important means of organizing social relationships (Scott 1988). In order to specifically analyze how societies define bodies as male or female (= sexual differences) and to trace the significance attributed to these sexual differences (= gender) necessitates the use of analytic categories. Following Joan W. Scott’s essay “Gender: a useful category of historical analysis” (Scott 1988), we have to distinguish between the perception of sexual differences and various attributions that are based on these perceptions (Scott 1988: pp. 42–50). These attributions of meanings are often established by societies as generalized understandings and not so much as something constructed and performed. In this context such attributions of meanings also function to legitimize existing social hierarchies (Scott 1988). Moreover, we recognize here Judith Butler’s later contribution: inquiring how our socialization determines the perception

of sexual difference. Thus sexual differences are not essential entities but historical and social constructs (Butler 1990, 1993; see also Scott 1988: p. 48; Bahrani 2001: p. 9). Based on this theoretical view, our own socialization is invariably reflected in any scholarly examination of societies dating from the antiquities, which in turn requires additional deliberation (see also Van de Mieroop 1999: p. 138; Bahrani 2001: pp. 3–4).

Dealing with gender and sexual differences as an important organizational basis of societies it may be necessary here to briefly address the term “society.” Theodor Geiger’s definition (1988: p. 39) is still useful: society is the “essence of persons living together in a common space or temporarily united in a given space.”¹ With regard to this broad definition, a common feature may be determined for the peoples living under Achaemenid rule: they are dependent on the Great King. Indeed, this relationship of dependency, which may of course be expressed in highly diverse relationships of power, is a central structural element within the Achaemenid Empire.²

On the basis of these general considerations, this chapter focuses on gender relationships, which are expressed in the various power relationships, as Scott (1988) has observed theoretically.

Synthesis of the Current Scholarship and Aims of this Chapter

Neither standard works on Achaemenid history (e.g. Briant 2002; Wiesehöfer 2004) nor currently published source books (Kuhrt 2007; Lenfant 2011) have paid much attention to gender relations. Theoretical reflections on gender are limited to specific regions of the ancient Near East, such as Mesopotamia (e.g. Asher-Greve 1998; Van de Mieroop 1999; Bahrani 2001; Parpola and Whiting 2002; Bolger 2008).

Until now, the research has mainly concentrated on the history of women in the Achaemenid period. Maria Brosius’ *Women in Ancient Persia* (1996, reprint 2002), for example, offers key insights into the living conditions of women at court as well as their opportunities in the economy of the court at Persepolis.³ The general focus on women’s history is also reflected in the fact that the entries for “women” in relevant encyclopedias do not have a corresponding lemma for “men” or “gender” (e.g. The New Pauly: Brosius 1998; EnIr: Brosius 2010).

A few studies have raised the issue of the state of the source materials and the question of possible historical interpretations. In 1983, for example, Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg (reprint 1993) demonstrated in a relevant article that western views on Achaemenid women are distorted by classical sources. Nonetheless, precisely these western sources continue to provide the basis for a few recently published works.⁴

This chapter aims to investigate gender in the Achaemenid period (550–331 BCE) by focusing on concepts of manliness and femininity. Proceeding from the methodological considerations and the possibilities provided by records dating from the Antiquities, our main concern relates to the question of whether we may draw conclusions about gender relations in Achaemenid society beyond the literary discourse.

Writing About Sexual Differences: The Literary Sources

The following remarks are based on the indigenous sources of the Achaemenid heartland (the Persis/Fars) and on Greek and Latin texts that deal with Achaemenid society. Authors of the latter texts provide outsiders' perspectives on ancient Persia. They are especially interested in the king and his circle, but they mainly reflect Greek and Roman views about manliness and femininity, even when writing about foreign societies. For this reason, these sources should be interpreted in light of the literary discourse. We would like to qualify the statements of the classical sources to the extent that we understand them as narratives, which convey contemporary conceptions of manliness and femininity.

Cuneiform scripts should also be used cautiously. Official royal inscriptions concentrate on the male elite and their ideal virtues. They attest only the contemporary elite discourse and are ideologically biased. And although archival texts from Persepolis do provide some indications about female members of the Achaemenid court and about women of lower ranks, there are still only a small number of edited texts, which thus prevents general inferences.

The following section examines the evidence as regards sex differences and gender relations. First, however, a few thoughts on gendered writing and speech.

Sexual Differences and Gender in Script, Language, and Grammar

Sexual differences are established linguistically. Elamite and Old Persian use Sumerian logograms as sex markers in the written language. The determinative MÍ prefixes a woman's name or a woman's occupation; the determinative LÚ ("man") a man's. Sex is indicated by the written system, not by the spoken language, which influences linguistic concepts. Breast-fed babies are called "(young) man or person" (GURUŠ, e.g. Fort. 9189: 4); girls are called "female offspring" (*fpuhu fmuti*). This means that the sex is indicated only by

the female determinative, which is prefixed to the term *pubu* or “(male) offspring.” The same practice is common for older boys (^m*pubu* GURUŠ.*na*: PF 1201: 5–8) and girls (^f*pubu* MUNUS.*na*: e.g. PF 1424: 5). Apparently, it was more important to be the “son” or the “daughter” of someone (e.g. *sunki pakri* “the king’s daughter”: PFa 5), since the primary social stratification within Achaemenid society was defined by rank and occupation.

Gender differentiation may be observed in the grammar as well. Elamite has grammatical sex, which has nothing to do with the two sexes “male” and “female.” Rather, *nomina* are considered either as personal (animated) or impersonal (unanimated). Sex is either unmarked or lexically distinguished (e.g. *adda* = “father”/*amma* = “mother”; *iki* = “brother”/*šutu* = “sister”; *tempti* = “lord”; *zana* = “lady”).

In terms of language, there is also the peculiarity that both Elamite and Old Persian lack the vocabulary that would denote gender transgressions (eunuchs, effeminates). Both languages reflect a gender dichotomy for Achaemenid society.

Concepts of Royal Manliness

Royal and noble women hardly ever appear in either the inscriptions of the Achaemenid kings or the reliefs in their residences. The sources deal mainly with the body of the king. The Achaemenid royal ideology is based on manliness. Thus our discourse on royalty and imperial power cannot be generalized for the entire male Achaemenid society. This discourse concerns members of the leading clans, members of the court, or the satraps, who all had to imitate the king. It was not for ordinary Persians.

Since the Achaemenids are heirs of the Mesopotamian and Elamite royal ideologies, their official documents concentrate on the image of the perfect ruler, for instance Cyrus the Great in the Cyrus Cylinder (Kuhrt 2007: pp. 70–72). Particularly from the regency of Darius I, the cardinal virtues of the Achaemenid kings are stereotypically repeated in writings. His merits are highlighted, for example, in the gravestone inscriptions in Naqš-i Rostam (DNa and DNb⁵): the king has been instated to his office by Ahura-Mazda (the highest deity) in order to establish order out of chaos. This cosmic order is a result of righteous wars, pursued at the far reaches of the world (DNa § 4). The king is an outstanding warrior, archer, and equestrian lancer (DNb § 2g–h; § 8g–h). Furthermore, he is a perfect hunter and a hero, who overpowers wild beasts or mythical monsters in face-to-face duels (see PFS 7*, a seal of Darius I). Only the king is capable of subduing these powers of chaos. He is not only the cultivator of the land but also its creative Maker (DSe § 5); he restores dilapidated buildings and plans new residences, such

as Persepolis (DPf) or Susa (DSf). The king is a just ruler, who can distinguish between right (OP *arta* “truth/order”) and wrong (OP *drauga* “lie,” DNb §2a; DB § 63–64). He does not have a violent temper: “I keep that under control by my thinking power. I control firmly my impulses” (DNb § 2b). This ability to think and his intelligence enable him to recognize rebellions and to solve problems (DNb § 2f; § 8g). His subjects’ duties are their obedience and loyalty to him. Cooperation is rewarded (DNb § 2c.e; § 8c), whereas apostasy is severely punished: “I am furious in the strength of my revenge” (DNb § 2h; DB § 64).

In contrast to classical sources, the sexual activity of the king, his virility, or the fact that he possesses many women, is not emphasized in Achaemenid inscriptions or reliefs. Yet the designation of the successor still during the rule of a king indicates the importance of male offspring for the preservation of the dynastic lineage (e.g. Xerxes by Darius: XPf § 4). In Elamite there is the term *rubu*, which marks a “legitimate offspring” (EW II 1046). This is possibly contrasted with the term *taqar* or “bastard” (EW I 287: verification for this term appears only in the Middle Elamite period). Since transmitted Persepolis Tablets indicate that ordinary Persian women received a double allowance for the birth of boys, one may determine a general preference for sons. Yet this does not indicate that girls were killed, since the transmitted numbers show an equilibrium of female and male babies. The source material demonstrates that the royal inscriptions and reliefs only emphasize the superiority of the male sovereign. The king exceeds all other men in physical prowess and beauty. His authority and omnipotence are visualized in the reliefs (by which he is always depicted as taller than all other persons).

Concepts of Elitist Femininity: Women in the Royal Milieu

As mentioned above, royal and noble women were not officially portrayed in the Persis.⁶ This resembled Assyrian and Babylonian practice, whereby queens were either never depicted or, if at all, only with the king. However, this is in stark contrast to former Elamite times. Several recent studies (Carter 2014; Matsushima 2016; Brosius 2016) have shown that Elamite queens and noble women were publicly visible on different kinds of media. Until Neo-Elamite times (early first millennium BCE) they were frequently mentioned in royal inscriptions but also portrayed on seals, gemstones, reliefs, and depicted as life-size statues. Thus the absence of women in official Achaemenid art cannot be explained by a lack of source material. Rather, it is a result of the Achaemenid idea of the male ruler. He, his power, and his magnificence are important; the queen or female aspects of royalty are not.

The indigenous sources indirectly support the distinction drawn in the classical sources between “legitimate wives” and other female companions of the king, since the Elamite term *rubu(r)* seems to signify the “son of a legitimate wife” (EW II 1044). An Old Persian expression for “concubine” has thus far not been attested, but philologists reconstruct an original **harčī-*, derived from the Armenian **harč*, as “second wife, concubine.” Until now, however, there has been neither written nor archeological confirmation of a secluded “harem.” Likewise there is no evidence for the large number of women to which the classical sources attest.

The Persepolis Tablets use at least three categories of women: *mutu*, *irti*, *dukšiš* (Brosius 2002: pp. 25–26). The title *dukšiš* (pl. *dukšišbe*) denotes women who belong to the king’s family, such as the princess(es), the king’s wife, his sisters, and also the ruling queen, such as Amestris (wife of Xerxes). The term *irti* (“wife”) has a somewhat broader meaning, which is used also for non-royal or aristocratic relations. These kinship terms were secondarily used also for court ranks. The Elamite *mutu*, “(ordinary) woman,” by contrast, appears connected to motherhood and is prefixed to female personal names.

In official texts, royal and noble women mainly remain anonymous, as was also the case in older neighboring cultures. This holds true also for many of the Persepolis Fortification Tablets. A daughter of Darius I (perhaps Artazostre in Hdt. 6.43.1) is described as “the wife of Mardonius, daughter of the king” (PFa 5: *Mardunuya irtiri sunki pakri*). This means that her status as wife and the fact of her kinship to the king are significant, though not, however, her personal name. In addition, there is reference to the father as head of a clan: three of Darius I’s sisters were identified as “daughters” (*fpakbe*) of Hystaspes, although Darius was already king at this time (PFa 31).

In those cases in which royal women acted independently, their personal names are handed down in the Persepolis Tablets. These sources indicate that women had their own property and could travel around the country in order to control their estates and workforce. The women used their personal seals, which stylistically emulated those of the men, with images of heroic duels (Artystone: PFS 38) and hunting scenes (Irdabama: PFS 51). They were not passive; rather, they had their own areas of activity where they could obtain social prestige by imitating men. For example, they could organize their own banquets or give audiences (e.g. seal impression PFS 77*; Brosius 2010⁷).

Concepts of Subordinated Manliness: Members of the Elite

In the Bisutun inscription, the term *šalu* (“princely,” DB § 3; OP *amātā*-Fort. 2874: 5) is used to denote “noblemen” (*šā-lū-ip*: EW II 1128; also e.g. in PF 1017: 7), whose relationships of dependency to the king varied.

One such structure is also confirmed in the Persepolis Tablets, which name the “son of the royal house” (*mišapuša*: EW II 936), who was a close relative of Darius I (PF 1793; PFa 24; PFa 29). Similar to women’s titles, this designation was later used for a court rank.

This information notwithstanding, details on the Achaemenid elite are sparse. Only a few persons are individually named and officially inscribed in the written records (e.g. Parnakka). Apart from Darius I’s co-conspirators (DB § 68) in the Bisutun inscription, only Gobryas and Aspathines are depicted standing behind the king at his grave in Naqš-i Rostam (DNC-d).

According to the inscriptions, the status of the male elite does not correspond to a peer group with the king; it is a status of subordination. Old Persian uses the expression *bandaka* for this type of relationship, derived from **banda* (“girdle,” “belt”), literally “the ones who wear the girdle of allegiance.” *Bandaka* describes the personal bond of loyalty (in more detail see Tuplin 2010), which bound the elite to their king. The king “demotes them from a peer group to servants” (Kuhrt 2007: p. 620), whose past deeds for the king are celebrated, thereby whose families had been awarded prestige and yet who had no special rights. The elite did not have a place next to the omnipotent king and his hegemonic manliness. Their (the elite’s) manliness is defined by rank, which while visualized in reliefs by different types of clothing is not more precisely specified in texts. Rank differences in the Tablets are graspable only through differing dispensations of allowances.

Concepts of Subordinated Masculinity and Femininity: Ordinary Persians

In the official inscriptions, references to “Persian men” (OP *martiya*) are relatively frequent: e.g. DPd, “this country Persia which Ahura-Mazda bestowed upon [him is] good, possessed of good horses, possessed of good men” (also DNa; DSab; cf. Hdt. I 136). The subjects are – like horses – above all “useful” as part of the military power. The role of ordinary Persian women in this context is unknown.

By contrast, the Persepolis Tablets provide insight into the everyday life of the male and female workforce of the Achaemenid palace economy. Ordinary workers are named according to their rank within the working group or the factories that employed them. Some craft workers (i.e. weavers) appear to be exclusively reserved for one sex, but most professions include male and female workers, often in mixed groups. Female managers head teams of female workers as well as co-ed teams. The *araššara pašabena*, the “female supervisor of *pašap* (women),” had a prominent and privileged position among the working women (Brosius 2002: pp. 146–147). She received the highest monthly allowances within the workgroup (e.g. PF 847). Yet despite her high position,

men were the main benchmarks in the lists of allowances, since men were named first. Another group mentioned in the Tablets are specialized male and female workers who earned equal pay. Thus there was no obvious pay difference based on sex. But in general, scholars suggest that women in unskilled professions received a third less pay than men (Brosius 2002: p. 186).

Ordinary Persians were also seen as *bandaka*. The king expected loyalty from them (cf. DNb § 2c–h). At the same time, however, they symbolized the basis of his power. Several depictions clearly illustrate this, such as at the royal graves in Persepolis and Naqš-e Rostam, where subjects bear the enthroned king.

Manliness and Femininity in the Persian Empire: The View of Greek and Latin Authors

Greek and Latin sources provide many images of Persians. We may read how Persians act and behave, or even about what they look like. But all of this information about manliness and femininity comes from outsiders' perspective, which above all expresses how Greek and Roman authors wish to record the Persians in a literary discourse (as Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1993 demonstrated concerning women). The source book by Amélie Kuhrt (*The Persian Empire* 2007) makes it clear that with a certain frequency, Persians are largely mentioned regarding two activities: the sphere of political and military actions and that of the royal banquet. We thus focus on these two areas, after which we will analyze the conveyed images of femininity and manliness.

Concepts of Royal Manliness

According to the indigenous sources, the Great King is also described in the classical sources as a ruler with universal authority (Arist. Pol. 7.6–7), who decides about peace, war, and the law. He is described as well as a successful hunter (Xen. Cyr. 1.4–5), as a ruler over wild beasts (Ctes. FGrH 688F 14, 43), and as the one who makes the right decisions (Ath. XII 548c, Nep. Kings 1, 4). Further, we read that the beauty and height of the king tower above all else (Hdt. 7.187.2; Str. 15.3.21; Nep. Kings 1.4; Plut. Alex. 21.6).⁸ Strikingly, although some authors' depictions (such as Herodotus') at least partially pick up Achaemenid propaganda, the positive self-portrayal of the Achaemenid kings is often inverted; that is, individual episodes may attest unjust, irascible, and cowardly kings.

Greek and Latin sources provide different images of royal manliness among the Achaemenids. These are conveyed via particular literary figures and their

interactions. Three types of rulers who dominate the literary discourse may be distinguished: the despotic and unrestrained king, the cowardly and weak king, and the perfect king.

The despotic king is well exemplified in the figure of Xerxes I. Aeschylus depicts him as a tyrant, who shows no consideration to traditions or to divine right. He cherishes only a desire for luxury. The despotic ruler, according to Herodotus, too, transgresses the *nomoi*. In this context, violence against women counts as one of the three worst crimes a tyrant may commit (Hdt. 3.80.5; see also the examples in Hdt. 3.32; Hdt. 9.111–113). A further feature for this type of ruler is lack of restraint and excessiveness (*hubris*). No human being, no secular rule can stop kings' excessiveness because the king not only represents the law, he is the law. See Cambyses, for example: "The king can do everything he wants" (Hdt. 3.31.4). He rules arbitrarily by handing out death sentences, without considering the social rank of the victim (Hdt. 3.5.5: Cambyses orders 12 noble Persians to be buried alive head first). In connection with the concept of the despotic ruler there are other features, which are mentioned and negatively connoted. For example, the invisible king (Ps-Arist. Mund. 398a), the secluded king (Plut. Artax. 5.5), and the deified king, who requires homage from his subjects (Isocr. Paneg. 151; Ath. 14.652b; Plut. Them. 27.4). Kings may also be negatively characterized because of their sexual practices. Cambyses is described as sexually deviant for marrying his full sister (Hdt. 3.31.1–2; cf. also 1.136).

Another type of poor ruler is conveyed by the literary figure of Darius III. Darius III symbolizes the cowardly king, who frequently flees the battlefield, abandoning his army and ultimately the royal court as well (e.g. Arr. Anab. 2.11.2, 4; 2.13.1; 3.16.1). The image of the cowardly ruler is already handed down by Ctesias (e.g. Artaxerxes II: FGrHist 688 F 16, 67). But it is not only the individual figure of the king who acts without courage. In certain contexts the classical sources create a portrait of cowardly Persians as a collective. Thereby they work with literary motifs, e.g. women who exhort the coward and fleeing Persian soldiers (Nic. Dam. FGrH 90 F 66, 43–44).

Cyrus the Great is one of the few rulers who fulfill the concept of a perfect king. A main characteristic for this type of ruler is – according to indigenous sources – military prowess. If the king is the best commander and fighter, then he may lead his army successfully. But the king does not win a battle alone; he needs courageous soldiers on his side. Thus just as the motif of the cowardly Persian is generated in literary discourse, we also find the motif of the courageous Persian. The brave Persians are raised in a special way. From childhood they are trained for hunting and war. They are also made familiar with activities that distinguish one as an honorable and loyal Persian (Xen. Anab. 1.9.3–4; Xen. Cyr. 1.2.15). In the view of Greek and Latin authors, it behooves men to raise boys once they have turned five (Hdt. 1.136; Str. 15.3.18). The

influence of women should be avoided as much as possible for this period of the child's development, since it leads to unmanly royal behavior, as may be read in Plato (Nom. 3.694 d–e; 3.695 a–b).

The perfect ruler not only dominates the battlefield but also efficiently arranges favors (e.g. Xen. Cyr. 8.2.7–8; Plut. Artax. 14.5, 15.2; Plut. Alex 69.1). In addition, the king presents himself as a donor, who shows his splendor at banquets (e.g. Heraclid. Cum. FGrH 689 F 2). At the same time he puts into force a domineering social order: the status of the invited guests is expressed by the seating arrangements and relative proximity to (or distance from) the king.

A general feature that is found in each of the three ruler types is the possession of many women, which was referred to by Herodotus (1.136.1, 3.69) and Strabo (15.3.17) as a general Persian custom. Referring to Heraclides of Cumae, Athenaeus (12.514b) indicates 300 women of the (anonymous) Persian king. The ruler keeps watch with a jealous eye over them (e.g. Plut. Artax 27.1: “do not touch the royal concubines”; in a more generalized sense, one that relates to all Persians, see also Plut. Them. 26.5). Interpreting this indication of the possession of many women is challenging for scholars because the ancient sources provide no clear information about polygyny among the Persians. We interpret it here as a strategy to illustrate the ruler's omnipotence. Possessing many women evokes the image of a sexually active ruler who is able to sire many offspring.

The Concept of Elitist Femininity: Women in the Royal Milieu

Classical sources mention the possession of many women (Hdt. 3.2; 3.69) living in segregated rooms (Hdt. 3.68). They also inform us about the practice of a king assuming his predecessor's wives (Hdt. 3.88, 2; Curt. 6.6.8). In general, Greek and Latin texts distinguish between the king's “legitimate wives,” who have the distinction of bearing the king's legitimate heirs (Hdt. 3.2), and other female partners (Hdt. 1.135; Ath. 13.556b; Plut. Artax. 27.1). A hierarchy among the royal women is attested, since concubines, for example, must prostrate themselves in front of the queen (Athen. 13.556b). Indeed, in this social framework, the queen receives special treatment even from the king himself. Furthermore, only concubines – and not the queen – are expected to see the ruler drunk and exuberant (Plut. Mor. 140b). At the same time, “the king rules his wife as absolute owner” (Ath. 13.556b). Therefore the royal women are alongside the ruler even on his military campaigns (e.g. Hdt. 7.184–187; Diod. Sic. 17.38.1; Arr. Anab. 2.11. 9–10). This expresses royal women's dependency on the king.

In considering the characterization of the noble Persian women, we may recognize analogies in and also differences from the Greek and Roman norms. The ideal virtues of a woman are expressed in motherhood (Hdt. 1.136, Str. 15.3.17), beauty (Ath. 13.609a; Arr. Anab. 4.19.5–6; Plut. Alex. 21.6, 10), seclusion (Plut. Artax. 26.5–9; Ath. 13.576d), and obedience (Ath. 13.556b). These women are marked by their function in the family as mother, daughter, wife, or also concubine, whereby the king also represents the benchmark for this characterization.

However, classical sources also describe feminine behaviors of Persian women that contrast with the Greek and Roman norms. Women in the royal milieu are occasionally depicted as active: for example, they autonomously punish people (Parysatis: Ctes. FGrH 688 F 15, 52; F 15, 56–57, Amytis: Ctes. FGrH 688 F 9, 6); they are engaged in politics (Phaedymia: Hdt. 3.66–69, 88; Parysatis: Plut. Artax. 2.3–4.1); they cause (Nitetis: Hdt. 3.1–3; Ath. 13.560d–e) or initiate (Atossa: Hdt. 3.134.2) wars; they are cruel (Parysatis: Ctes. FGrH 688 F 15, 51–53; F 16, 66) and jealous (Amestris: Hdt. 9.108–110); and sometimes they even behave in a manly way (Atossa: Hellanic. FGrH 678a F 7; Roxane: Ctesias FGH 688 F 15 [55]; Amestris the Younger: Ath. XII 514b–c). At times queens act at men's behest (Phaedymia: Hdt. 3.66–69, 3.88; Atossa: Hdt. 3.133–134).

Achaemenid queens and noblewomen are frequently depicted as faceless characters who appear as a collective, sometimes even namelessly. The women serve merely to better characterize the king. They stand in as beautiful property. The female body is also a tool, an object of desire, and a means of depicting the king's power.

The Concept of Subordinated Manliness: The Nobleman Who is Not the King

Achaemenid society, as stated above, was dominated by one person: the king. A society that is so strongly focused on a hegemonic manliness and structured on a basis of gender dichotomy and gender hierarchy must at the same time provide space for further concepts of manliness in order for everyday life to function. For the Achaemenids, concepts of non-hegemonic manliness, which were defined by their dependency on the king, can be determined. As Kuhrt (2007: p. 620) clearly exposed for noble Persians, “in relation to the king, they had no special rights, no greater claim on his person than anyone else. They were all the king's *bandaka*.” This “bond” to the king is depicted in various episodes, all of which illustrate that the connection to the king is more important than that to the family (Xen. Anab. 1.6.1; Xen. Hell. 4.36; Diod. 17.30.4). Thus the education of the nobles concentrated on fulfilling the duties toward the royal dynasty.

How the hierarchical relationships between king and nobility are organized depends on the rank of the respective subject (Curt. 10.1.22–23). Being born into a higher rank enables men to acquire social prestige (through royal gifts: Hdt. 4.143.2–3). To be a member of a higher rank also gives men the possibility to participate in political power, for example as an advisor (Mardonius: Diod. Sic. 11.1.3; Nep. Paus. 1.2; Artabanus: Hdt. 7.10, 7.18; 7.46–52; Megabyzus: Ctes. FGrH 688 F 14, 43). One's social position is extremely important and made visible: through clothing (Str. 15.3.19), forms of greeting (Hdt. 1.134), and the allocation of food. The social position of a Persian is seen also in the seating arrangement at a banquet. The closer one is able to sit to the king, the higher the social status (Hdt. 8.67.2–68.1).

Impressions of Subordinated Manliness and Femininity: Ordinary Persians

Precise information about ordinary Persians is scarce. They are known for having many sons and for their “prowess in fighting, the chief proof of manliness” (Hdt. 1.136; cf. also Str. 15.3.17, Plut. Alex. 69.1). In general, the classical view of the Persians is highly distorted. Quite frequently they are mentioned in this perspective as merely a passive tool, entirely subjected to the mercy of the king and his family. Persian soldiers thus become victims of a despotic king who impels them into battle (e.g. at Thermopylae, Hdt. 7.221). Xerxes even beats his soldiers at the crossing over the Hellespont (the Dardanelles; Hdt. 7.56.1). The soldiers were occasionally depicted as cowardly (Nic. Dam. FGrH 90 F 66, 3–4). Sometimes they were even described as the king's slaves (Hdt. 9.16).

Women servants appear as the queen's tools (Hdt. 1.134; Ath. 13.556b; Plut. Artax. 19.8–9) or as objects of the king's desire (Ath. 12.514b). Only seldom are ordinary Persian women described as brave (Nic. Dam. FGrH 90 F 66, 43–4) or otherwise attributed with a male habitus, whereas men are not rarely characterized as womanly (Hdt. 8.88.3).

Effeminates and Eunuchs: A Cause for Friction in Western Perceptions

Various modern western studies start from the assumption that effeminates and eunuchs were an inherent element of Persian society (e.g. Llewellyn-Jones 2013).⁹ Indeed, the classical sources provide some indications that allow for such an interpretation. We repeatedly find narratives about persons in the royal milieu who stand out because of their physical appearances (Curt. 6.6.8). From the viewpoint

of Greek and Latin sources, these persons appear as something peculiar, as people who do not fit into the concept of a dichotomous two-sex system. Effeminate and eunuchs represent neither masculinity nor femininity, even though they are endowed with feminine attributes (Parsondes: Nic. Dam. FGrH 90 F 4, 3; Ath. 12.530d). This vagueness is used as a tool for a negative characterization of the persons in question. We read about eunuchs either connected to assassination attempts (Ctes. FGrH 688 F 9a; F 15 [54]) or responsible for them (Plut. Artax. 17.5–6). By contrast, classical sources also report on the merits of eunuchs as loyal companions (Xen. Cyr. 7.5.59–65; Pl. Alc. 121d). We read as well about how eunuchs came to be so (Hdt. 8.105). All of these indications about effeminate and eunuchs in the classical sources serve at times to create the image of an exotic “Orient,” which strongly differs from the lives of Greeks and Romans. As long as Old Persian evidence does not support the importance of eunuchs, the western sources have to be interpreted cautiously.

Summary and Conclusion

The rock inscriptions of the Achaemenid kings in various locations in Persis/Fars point to a normative male matrix. They reflect the official discourse about the ideal ruler, but not of a universal ideal Persian manliness. The Achaemenid queens as well as the elite women are not present in official depictions and are mentioned by name in only a few of the archival texts, which also name ordinary Persian women, albeit as receivers of allowances. Effeminate and eunuchs, who play an important role in western conceptions and perceptions about Achaemenid society, are irrelevant in the indigenous sources. Classical sources concentrate on Achaemenid customs and traditions and the relationships between elite men and women. They conjure up stereotypical images of the king, the queen, and others in their entourage. These characterizations reflect Greek and Roman patriarchal norms.

Comparing “oriental” and “occidental” concepts of manliness and femininity, one may determine a few major aspects as regards Achaemenid society. Language and social stratification indicate a gender dichotomy. One may also ascertain a gender hierarchy, in which women – independent of their rank – are subordinate, and in which men hold the dominating positions in government, economy, military, and commerce. Within groups of men and women, additional hierarchies may be observed. The mutual dependency between gender and rank here is thereby obvious. The result is the concept of hegemonic manliness, embodied by the king. Nevertheless, general statements on gender relations beyond the literary discourses are limited in scope. Possibly the inclusion of pictorial representations of Persians on Greek as well as Persian artifacts with a focus on the body will broaden our perspectives.

NOTES

- 1 We thank Laurie Cohen for reading through the English manuscript, for her suggestions, and for translations of Geiger's definition – this definition is still used in introductory sociology textbooks. See Kopp, J., Schäfer, B. (eds.) (2010). *Grundbegriffe der Soziologie*. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, p. 89.
- 2 For other models of Achaemenid society (e.g. focusing on the so-called ethno-class) see Chapter 72 King – Elites and Subjects – Slaves and Chapter 60 Hierarchy and Ethno-classe Dominante; Briant (2002: p. 88) divides the social fabric into king/elite, priests, soldiers, and farmers. Dandamaev and Lukonin (1994: p. 152) compare the structures with Mesopotamia and, according to their legal status, distinguish three social groups.
- 3 Brosius' results pick up from Wouter Henkelman (1999), among others, and extend them.
- 4 E.g. on Herodotus, see Boedeker 2011; on Ctesias, e.g. Gera 2007; Truschnegg 2011; Madreiter 2012; on Athenaeus, e.g. McClure (2003).
- 5 A nearly identical diction is used by Xerxes in XPL. See also the Aramaic version of Darius' Bisutun text from Elephantine (TADAE III C2.1 pp. 70–1) or the account of the local dynast Arbinas.
- 6 But Brosius (2010) refers to representations of royal or elite women on reliefs in Egypt, at Dascylium (Asia Minor), and on a carpet from Pazyryk (Siberia), which are all situated at or even beyond the borders of the Achaemenid Empire.
- 7 Similar scenes are depicted on two more seals and on funerary stelae from Asia Minor; see details in Brosius (2010).
- 8 In general, Briant (2002: pp. 225–227); with a special focus on Herodotus' *Histories* see Gufler (2010).
- 9 Recent studies also deal with the etymology and meaning of the Greek term *eunouchos* and the Akkadian *ša rēši*, and question that the terms were used only for castrates, e.g. Jursa (2011); Pirngruber (2011); Lenfant (2012); and Madreiter (2012).

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SECTION VIII

**THE PERSIAN
EMPIRE AT WAR**

CHAPTER 79

Legitimization of War

Roel Konijnendijk

The Persian Empire was a creature of war. The product of an impressive string of conquests, it survived for over two centuries in large part due to its highly effective military system. But how did it justify its wars? How did its kings legitimize their campaigns to the people who shouldered the cost?

This question has received limited attention from scholars. There is a widely held belief that imperialist aggression is in the nature of the thing – that the cycle of power and conquest sustains itself. As Cawkwell (2005: p. 87) put it, “there is no need to ask why empires expand.” For Kuhrt (1995: p. 671), it was enough to state that Persian expansion into the Aegean “was logical”; all other explanations are retrospective. The Persian Empire, being an empire, did not need to justify its constant desire for more.

Yet, even though no one at the time would have denied the unstoppable power of Persia (Harrison 2011: pp. 67–68 n.13), even the mightiest empires are loath to present their policies in coldly realist terms. The dictum that might makes right tends at least to be coated with a veneer of more palatable reasoning. The question here is to what extent that reasoning may be recovered.

It is a regrettable fact that Persian evidence does not allow anything like the comprehensive work of Oded (1992) on Assyrian justifications for war. Relevant royal inscriptions are rare, and only one – Darius I’s inscription at Bisotun – dwells in any detail on the campaigns of a known king; most other texts are frustratingly generic (Briant 2002: p. 550; Sancisi-Weerdenburg

1999: pp. 92, 95; 2002: pp. 588–90). However, the Assyrian material provides invaluable comparative evidence. It can be used to illuminate the official legitimization of Persian wars wherever traces of such communications remain. Greek narrative sources sometimes do concern themselves with motivations for particular campaigns, and if used with appropriate caution they may yield some helpful information – as long as we keep asking to what extent the Greeks were able to perceive the Persian Empire as a fundamentally different sort of state than the ones in which they themselves resided.

What follows is only a brief attempt to fit the available evidence into something like a coherent picture of Persian justifications for war. Why did they march, and how did they legitimize doing so? Hopefully this overview will encourage studies into this aspect of the history of the Achaemenids – rulers whose wars served a range of different purposes beyond merely taking what they could.

Royal Ideology

The Persian ideology of kingship, founded on centuries of Mesopotamian and Iranian tradition, was a powerful legitimizing force. The peoples of the empire were told (DB 60–61; Rollinger 2014; Llewellyn-Jones 2013: pp. 26–28) that the king was created by Auramazda as the supreme protector of divine order and peace. The entire earth owed him tribute. This claim to universal dominion, made earlier by the Assyrians and other Mesopotamian rulers (Oded 1992: pp. 163–176), put the Persian king in a unique relationship with the world (Xen. *An.* 1.7.6; *Cyr.* 8.6.21; Aesch. *Pers.* 74–80). Rollinger (see Chapter 58 Empire, Borders, and Ideology) provides a more detailed assessment of the claim. What concerns us here is how it affected official reasoning when the king of kings went to war.

First of all, divinely ordained world domination automatically justified campaigns against any lands that were not already under Persian control. As Oded put it for the Assyrians, they “in principle did not recognize the political independence of regularly organized states” – these were “either submissive or rebels” (1992: pp. 164–165; note Diod. 9.31.3, 9.35.3). Persian attacks on states outside the empire could simply be seen as the king “claiming his own” (Cawkwell 2005: p. 49). More ingeniously, since the king’s supreme position was legitimized as the will of a higher power, anyone else’s claim to independent rule could be condemned as a rebellion against truth itself. No one ruled but the king of kings; those who denied this were liars (Wiesehöfer 1996: p. 33; Raaflaub 2011: pp. 7–8). Darius I boasted that he had crushed the revolts of nine liar-kings, who had dared to defy Auramazda (DB 52–55); his campaigns against them were restorations of divine order, constructive acts that

paved the way for the triumph of truth and justice. This reasoning could be brought to bear both against rebels within the empire and against all peoples who had at any point entered into communications with Persia (Kuhrt 1988: pp. 95–98). Any nation the Persians encountered was assumed to be subject to the king's demands; any act of defiance or aggression on its part would naturally constitute a violation of order and truth.

The right to punish such violations was entirely taken for granted, and no actual *reason* is ever offered for these campaigns. Darius I repeatedly sends his forces to “smite” a rebel army “which does not acknowledge me” (DB 25, 26, 38, 50) – that is, the rebels had to be crushed because they were rebels. Xerxes' inscription at Persepolis tells us no more than that “there was among the countries inscribed above (one, which) was in turmoil... By the favor of Auramazda I defeated that country” (XPh 4a). Perhaps surprisingly, Greek sources rarely elaborate. When Thucydides and Xenophon described late fifth century Persian involvement in Greek affairs, they offered no more justification than that by the king's orders the cities of Ionia were to resume paying tribute (Thuc. 8.5.4–5; Xen. *Hell.* 1.1.9, 3.1.3, 3.4.5–6). Responses to revolts elsewhere are described even more casually (Hdt. 7.1, 7.7; Xen. *Hell.* 1.2.19; Diod. 15.41.1); of course the king simply “had to” fight all the perpetrators of the supposed “Satraps' Revolt” (Diod. 15.90). These bland treatments may be the result of the Greek authors' lack of Persian sources, but they may very well reflect the official stance of the Persian court. Ctesias in particular may have had access to detailed information – yet in his work, too, as Tuplin has pointed out (2011: p. 450 n.3), “reasons for warfare are rarely explicitly discussed.” The king was obliged to put down rebellions and punish aggression in the name of the divine will (as elaborated in Assyrian texts: Oded 1992: pp. 45, 95–99). War served to restore order. No further legitimization was needed.

The Duties of the King

Yet royal ideology did more than merely justify campaigns. The king's position as ultimate protector and overlord at least theoretically depended on his ability to show himself worthy; the empire could present itself as a beneficial force only if the king could prove that he used the countries' combined resources to secure prosperity and attain glory. Inscriptions boasted of “the spear of a Persian man,” the king as a warrior, conquering far and wide (DNa 4; Kuhrt 1995: pp. 681–682; Briant 2002: p. 213; Llewellyn-Jones 2013: p. 29). The king himself had to present evidence for this. Cyrus the Younger in fact seems to have legitimized his bid for the Persian throne by claiming to be more suited for it than his brother, King Artaxerxes II: a better rider, a braver hunter, a paragon of generosity and honor (Xen. *An.* 1.9; Plut. *Art.* 6.3;

Briant 2002: p. 621). Xenophon added that Artaxerxes would be no proper Persian if he gave up his throne without a fight (*An.* 1.7.9). If Plutarch preserves a genuine tradition, the king actually sought to prove his own worth by spreading the tale that he had personally charged and killed Cyrus at the battle of Cunaxa; he went to horrid lengths to keep those who knew the truth from speaking out (*Art.* 14.3–16.1). This was how a king could show himself able to protect his subjects and to carry out the will of the gods.

Needless to say, the best proof of a king's worth was conquest. In this sense royal ideology both legitimized and actively *demand*ed war. Many modern authors have argued that the Persians invaded Greece mainly because the requirements of kingship forced Xerxes' hand; he had recently come to the throne and, to put it bluntly, he had to conquer something (Cook 1983: p. 125; Sancisi-Weerdenburg 2002: p. 586; Cawkwell 2005: p. 49; Evans 2006: pp. 126–128, 137; Raaflaub 2011: pp. 10, 22; Harrison 2011: pp. 65–66). Both Darius I and Xerxes I, the only kings to have their deeds inscribed (Rollinger 2014), stress that their greatest victories occurred at the start of their reign. As a convention of royal propaganda, the purpose of this is clear: to immediately affirm the new king's right to rule. Oded (1992: p. 145) has noted that the necessity for an Assyrian king to prove himself in war was especially strongly felt early in his reign, and it is likely that the Persians continued the practice of proving their king's merit in this way. The Greeks certainly thought so: Herodotus envisioned Darius' wife urging Darius to go to war "so that the Persians will know their king is a man" (3.134), while Aeschylus had Xerxes taunted by his nobles for his lack of conquests (*Pers.* 753–758). The first task of the early Achaemenids was to crush any rebellions that had broken out; the second was to march, no matter where, and add more land to the empire.

In Herodotus' account, each king's career is suspiciously similar. They enjoy an unbroken string of victories until they set out against some remote area that is beyond the boundaries put in place by nature and the gods, and these campaigns invariably fail. It has been argued that this is Herodotus' warning against the dangers of unbridled imperialism, which can only end in misery (Cobet 1986: p. 16; Raaflaub 2002a: pp. 20–21; 2002b: pp. 172–173, 177; 2011: p. 24). Yet these tragic tales find striking justification in Assyrian royal inscriptions. Assyrian kings derived special glory from conquering places that had hitherto been considered out of reach – in mountainous regions, across rivers, or beyond the desert (Oded 1992: pp. 161, 165). It is in this light that we should see Cambyses' march against Ethiopia, Darius' bridging of the Hellespont and the Danube, and Xerxes' efforts to take his fleet and army into Greece. Again, if Plutarch is correct, the tradition persisted down to the reign of Artaxerxes II, who marched against the barren lands of the Cadusians but was forced to turn back (*Art.* 24–25). Royal propaganda would of course

deny any setbacks. The text of XPh, for instance, gives no indication that Xerxes failed to conquer Greece, and Dio Chrysostom related a “Persian version” denying that this failure ever occurred (11.149; Briant 2002: p. 541). The people had to know that a campaign was undertaken; it would never be officially admitted that it had come to naught.

Persian royal ideology appears to have shifted over time to focus more on the king as a timeless reality rather than an individual (Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1999: p. 110), removing the need for each new king to personally prove himself. Yet the history of Cyrus the Younger and Artaxerxes II suggests that the values of the old ideology lingered, and Persian kings never stopped responding forcefully to any rebellion in their realm (Diod. 16.43.1, 16.46.4). Driven by the demands of their position, they would find some place to take, or to take back; their ideology legitimized their wars, and their wars in turn legitimized their rule.

The Conquest of Greece

Our most detailed examination of Persian reasons to go to war actually comes from a Greek source. Herodotus describes at length the considerations that led Xerxes to embark on an invasion of Greece after the failure of his father’s earlier expedition; we hear nothing of this from any Persian source beyond the open-ended phrases of XPh. Luckily, the Greek material does not simply represent the perspective of an outsider with no clue how the Persian empire worked. As many modern authors have pointed out, there are signs that Herodotus had a reasonable idea of the intricacies of Persian kingship (Gould 1989: p. 69; Raaflaub 2002a: p. 17; Evans 2006: pp. 79–80, 124; Harrison 2011).

Some elements may make us doubt this view. For one thing, Herodotus places great emphasis on revenge. This form of justification is applied to almost every military campaign: Cyrus planned to attack Egypt because it had supported Croesus against him (Hdt. 1.153), Cambyses invaded Egypt to avenge a slight (3.1–3), Darius attacked Scythia because the Scythians had once seized Asia (4.1.1, 4.4, 4.119), and Xerxes meant to conquer Greece “to punish the Athenians for what they did to the Persians and to my father” (7.8b.1). The predominance of revenge as a motive has been explained as a result of the fact that the Greeks of Herodotus’ time would have easily recognized and accepted it as a driving force (Gould 1989: pp. 82–85; Lendon 2000: pp. 13–17). It is the reasoning of a Greek; some scholars have therefore dismissed it, along with the entire council scene where Xerxes decides to march against Greece, as a Herodotean invention (Briant 2002: pp. 158–159; Cawkwell 2005: pp. 87–88, 92; Evans 2006: p. 82). But it may not be so.

Oded has pointed out the importance of revenge against slights and aggression in Assyrian legitimization of war (Oded 1992: pp. 139–143, 180); it is also a central feature of a late seventh century BCE Babylonian “declaration of war” against Assyria (Gerardi 1986: pp. 31–32). Kuhrt has noted that other Mesopotamian sources appear to confirm Herodotus’ picture (1988: pp. 89–90; Raaflaub 2011: p. 10). Insults were keenly felt by a people who claimed supreme power over the world – and no one would argue that a war to avenge insult or injury was not justified. In each of the cases mentioned by Herodotus, vengeance may well have been one of the reasons offered by royal propaganda. Seen in this light, it appears that by their actions in the 490s BCE the Athenians had painted a target on their backs. While Kramer (2004) has argued that Athens never really gave earth and water in 507 BCE – and thus never formally recognized Persia as its overlord, only to rebel later on – the Athenian contribution to the Ionian Revolt probably sufficed to mark them for future submission to Persia (Cook 1983: pp. 92–93; Kuhrt 1988: pp. 91–92, 98–99). Their victory at Marathon practically guaranteed that a greater Persian expedition would be sent their way.

Of course, even Herodotus and his contemporaries realized that revenge against Athens was only a pretext for the conquest of Greece (6.94, 7.138–139; Aesch. *Pers.* 233–234; Cawkwell 2005: p. 103; Raaflaub 2011: p. 22). This, according to Herodotus, was bald-faced greed. The archetypal bad advisor Mardonius is made to encourage it, saying Persians do not need reasons to take what they can, and lying to make the Greeks seem like easy targets (Hdt. 7.9; Konijnendijk 2016). Yet even here the historian is willing to acknowledge other factors. He has Xerxes argue that by invading Greece he is simply obeying the Persian custom never to be at peace; “it is the will of the god,” and besides, it is Xerxes’ duty to match his ancestors’ achievements (Hdt. 7.8a.1–2). Herodotus is offering a range of reasons for him to go to war, and they are precisely the justifications derived from royal ideology: the claim to world empire and divine favor, the need for the king to prove himself, and even the role of the king as protector of the realm. It may seem absurd to find Xerxes arguing that his strike against Athens is preventive, that he must “either do or suffer” (Hdt. 7.11.3; Raaflaub 2002a: p. 16; Cawkwell 2005: p. 7) – but this sort of reasoning fit exactly within the framework of “official” legitimization. The survival of any independent state was a potential threat to the world order the king was meant to protect. While the greed of the king of kings could not be justified, in Herodotus’ version he seems hardly to blame; rather, he was bound by duty to undergo his royal fate (Cobet 1986: p. 16; Sancisi-Weerdenburg 2002: pp. 586, 588).

This fate, in fact, was to make a show of leading his peoples in arms across the Hellespont, defeating the Greeks in battle at Thermopylae, burning Athens to the ground, and returning home, job well done (D. Chr. 11.149).

As with Darius' campaign against the Scythians, lasting conquest was probably the aim, but it may not have been necessary for the king to achieve this in order to claim victory (Cawkwell 2005: p. 47). Due vengeance had been exacted; the reach of royal power had been effectively put on display. Herodotus' account up to this point seems perfectly in line with what we know of Persian legitimization of war, and we must assume he was well aware of the royal Persian perspective on the campaign. Perhaps his only blind spot was his failure to recognize – or his need to obscure from Greek readers – when the demands of Persian kingship had been met.

The Interests of Persia

The final form of justification to be considered is the cold logic of political expedience. With modern authors often taking a critical view of Greek sources and attempting to reconstruct the “real” motives of Persia by crediting the king with a shrewd grand strategy, it is somewhat ironic that Persian sources tell us nothing about such a strategy, and we rely exclusively on our interpretations of Greek narrative accounts. There was no place for Realpolitik in royal propaganda; it insisted, as far as we know, that the king played the game by the rules.

Throughout the first decades of its existence, the empire expanded in all directions, but the Persians seem to have realized that further conquests would lead them too far afield, and Persia eventually began to consolidate (Lloyd 1988: p. 63; Kuhrt 1995: p. 676). This change of focus may have been triggered, not by Xerxes' defeat, but by the success of the Athenian counteroffensive, coinciding with successive revolts in Babylon, Bactria, and Egypt. Strategic goals had to be reconsidered. The Greeks lived in fear of the king's return, but he never came (Cawkwell 2005: pp. 128–135).

No Persian or Greek source provides any evidence of the cognitive dissonance required for a king to both claim universal dominion and accept the independence of Greece. As far as we know, the practical limits of Persian power were quietly accepted. On only one occasion did a king press his claim to parts of mainland Greece: the first version of the treaty between Persia and Sparta insisted that “whatever land or cities the king has, or the king's ancestors had, shall be the king's” (Thuc. 8.18.1). However, when Sparta protested, the ambitious term was dropped (Thuc. 8.37, 8.58). The Persians instead fell back on their ancient claim to rule the whole of Asia – a claim that had long been known to the Greeks (Aesch. *Pers.* 762–771; Hdt. 9.116; Xen. *Cyr.* 8.8.1) – to justify campaigns of limited means and with limited ends. It is clear from Greek accounts that Persian support for Sparta in the Ionian War was tailored to suit their own interests (Thuc. 8.46.1–4; Xen. *Hell.* 1.5.9; Hyland 2007: pp. 8–11). Their entire policy in the region, up to and including

the eventual war against Sparta, served to recover the Ionian cities and thereby pacify the western fringe of the empire.

This was how strategic interests could serve as a legitimization for Persian diplomatic and military activity. The Persians may no longer have been free to dream of overseas conquest, but when warning signs appeared in the late 390s BCE that Athens might recover her naval power, King Artaxerxes II made sure straight away to impose the King's Peace, which effectively paralyzed the states of Greece and firmly secured his hold on Ionia (Seager 1974: pp. 36–37; Cawkwell 2005: pp. 169, 182). This was divide and rule at its finest. As long as the Greeks in their mutual suspicion guarded the terms of the peace, none of them would have the strength to stir trouble in Asia Minor. This allowed the king to concentrate on what was truly important: the ideologically necessary, strategically important, and self-evidently justified crushing of any rebellion within his domain.

The pragmatic policy implemented by the Persians in Asia Minor illustrates their priorities. Royal propaganda legitimized their wars primarily in the old ways: as the spread of god-given truth and justice and as the righteous punishment of those who had sinned against it. By embarking on such campaigns, the kings in turn legitimized themselves. It was no use taking risks or overstretching the empire's resources if there were more efficient ways to prove a king's worth – and no wars were easier to justify than those against liars and traitors.

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FURTHER READING

There are no works dealing specifically with the subject of this chapter. Works referenced above help to illuminate various aspects. Of particular interest are:

- Briant, P. (2002). *From Cyrus to Alexander: A History of the Persian Empire*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns. Still the main handbook on Achaemenid Persia and an excellent starting point. Comments on the nature of and ideology behind Persian warfare scattered throughout.
- Farrokh, K. (2007). *Shadows in the Desert: Ancient Persia at War*. Oxford: Osprey Publishing. Not a flawless work by any measure, it remains perhaps the only sizable monograph dedicated to Persian warfare as such.
- Hyland, J. (2018). *Persian Interventions: The Achaemenid Empire, Athens, and Sparta, 450–386 BCE*. Baltimore, MA: Johns Hopkins University Press. A detailed and up-to-date study of Greco-Persian diplomacy and warfare in a short period rich in sources.
- Oded, B. (1992). *War, Peace and Empire: Justifications for War in Assyrian Royal Inscriptions*. Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag. For lack of Persian evidence, this indulgent survey of relevant Assyrian sources helps the reader identify forms of legitimization and examine continuities.
- Raaflaub, K. (2011). Persian army and warfare in the mirror of Herodotus's interpretation. In R. Rollinger, B. Truschnegg, and R. Bichler (eds.), *Herodot und das Persische Weltreich – Herodotus and the Persian Empire* (Classica et Orientalia 3). Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, pp. 5–37. Thorough and critical treatment of Herodotus on Persian warfare, tested against Persian evidence.

CHAPTER 80

Structure of the Army and Logistics

Christopher Hassan

Research on the structure and logistics of the Achaemenid army has been rather limited. This chapter offers an overview of its organization by examining the division of military powers and analyzing the individual components of the Achaemenid army and its logistical support over a 230-year period. The Persian military probably began as a collection of warriors who were obligated to perform military service for their *primus inter pares*, but over the duration of the Persian Empire the army evolved into a complex institution which included a regimented hierarchy, efficient logistical support, and soldiers from many lands distinct in their languages as well as their combat doctrines. It was their high level of structured organization that allowed the Persian kings to unify such a diverse army and project their military power over such great distances.

Whilst many elements of military organization and equipment in the Persian army were developed and enhanced over 230 years of Achaemenid rule, the position of the king as the commander in chief of the army remained constant. From Cyrus II's first victory over the Medes around 559 BCE to the defeat of Darius III by Alexander of Macedon in 331 BCE, the armies of Persia answered unequivocally to the Great King. This does not mean that the Achaemenid kings commanded every Persian army in the field; the size of the empire made this impossible. But each major campaign of conquest and defense fell under the king's authority, even if he was acting through subordinates. This is prominently highlighted in the second attempt to reconquer Egypt in 373 BCE when Pharnabazus, the Persian commander, referred many of his decisions

back to the king in order to have his commands ratified by royal order (Diodorus 15.41). Nevertheless, the demands of maintaining such a large empire made the appointment of lower military commanders a necessity. This was first realized by Cyrus II who, after conquering the kingdom of Lydia at an uncertain date during the second half of the sixth century BCE, was forced to split his military forces to deal with a Lydian rebellion that had arisen after his departure. According to Herodotus, Cyrus entrusted a considerable army to the Median Harpagus who went on to pacify Lydia and conquer the Greek, Carian, and Lycian cities of Asia Minor whilst Cyrus took the main army on to the conquest of Babylon (Herodotus 1. 156–1.177). Building on the success of Cyrus II, in 522/21 BCE Darius I used the same principle to secure the Persian realm and quash nine separate revolts in the course of a single year that involved 19 victorious military engagements. In his *Behistun Inscription* Darius tells us how he assigned various elements from the loyal Persian army to several subordinate generals who, through the coordination of Darius as high commander and the occasional cooperation with the royal army that accompanied the king, were able to quell multiple rebellions from prominent provinces in very short order (DB, lines 16–54). It is also important to note that two of the generals mentioned in this inscription go on to become the only satraps ever mentioned by name in a Persian inscription. By the end of his reign Darius I was confident in assigning entire campaigns of conquest and retribution to his generals on the borders of the empire and successful generals could hope to be rewarded with lucrative positions as satraps. The Aegean campaign of 490 BCE, which culminated in the battle of Marathon, illustrates how military power could be bestowed upon noble and competent Iranians even if they were not members of the royal family. Datis, ostensibly the senior of the two generals in charge of the Aegean campaign, was not even a Persian but, like Harpagus before him, was a Mede who had proved himself worthy of the position. A tablet from Persepolis may indicate that Datis was involved in the suppression of the Ionian Revolt in 494 BCE and may well have caught the king's attention in this action (Briant 2002: p. 148). He was, however, accompanied by Artaphernes, a nephew of the king, with whom he held joint command, and although Datis is continually described as the chief decision-maker, it is likely that Artaphernes was sent as a royal representative (Hdt. 6.94–6.119). In preparation for the invasion of Greece in 480 BCE, Xerxes had planned his strategy with a full command staff of subordinate generals, admirals, engineers, and quartermasters. Following the sack of Athens and the battle of Salamis, Xerxes handed over military command to his general Mardonius, whilst he returned to Asia in order to focus on maintaining the political harmony of the empire (Hdt. 8.101–8.103). Although more power was granted to subordinate generals in later years, there are still many examples of kings such as Artaxerxes II taking the field and campaigning in hostile

territory such as Cadusia (Plutarch, *Life of Artaxerxes* 24.1), as well as Artaxerxes III's reconquest of Egypt (Diod. 16.40.3). The military role of the king is highlighted further by the responses of both Artaxerxes II and Darius III marching at the head of their armies when Persia was faced with the major invasions of the Macedonians in 333 BCE and the civil war between Artaxerxes and Cyrus the Younger in 401 BCE.

During the reign of Darius II the continued conflict with the city-states of mainland Greece had created enough problems for the western Asiatic satrapies to be placed under a regional commander with authority over multiple governors and their troops. This marshal was referred to as "Karanos" and held great authority (Xenophon, *Anabasis* 1.1). It is possible that Cyrus the Younger was the first "Karanos" to be given command of a set of satrapies in Asia Minor rather than a specific expedition, such as that of Otanes in his mission to conquer Samos for Darius I (Hdt. 3.141), and he appears to have been entrusted with overseeing the reconsolidation of Persian territories in Asia Minor. Perhaps surprisingly, in the wake of Cyrus' failed rebellion in 401 BCE, the position of "Karanos" was not dissolved but instead handed to Tissaphernes, the satrap of Lydia, presumably because the threat from cities such as Sparta was still a concern to Achaemenid authority. Over the course of the Achaemenid Empire military power became increasingly decentralized as individual satraps could gain more power and military marshals from outside the royal family were appointed more frequently. For the reign of Darius III, Arrian reports that Memnon, a Greek mercenary commander who had married into Persian nobility, had been appointed as "commander of lower Asia" (Arrian, *Anabasis of Alexander* 1.20). The appointment of a non-Persian to such an influential post marks the potential ability of the Persian military to recognize competence before breeding, but the presence of Pharnabazus, a high-born Persian, at Memnon's side is a reminder that the Achaemenids were keen to maintain their grasp on military matters.

The diffusion of military power down through the Persian army's hierarchy was facilitated in order to respond better to the multitude of minor conflicts that arose within the Persian Empire's borders. This system of decentralizing the military power of the empire and alleviating responsibility from the Great King was also embodied politically in the formation of the various satrapies that made up the empire's provinces. Wiesehöfer (1996: p. 56) explains that the satraps were charged primarily with the protection of the king's lands and were given remit to raise military forces of their own in order to enforce Achaemenid authority. In addition, subordinate garrison commanders were controlled by the satraps within their provinces (Briant 2002: pp. 340–343). Xenophon describes these garrisons and the military forces which the satraps maintained as subject to an annual military review from the central authority (Xen. *Oeconomicus* 4.5–4.6). It is important to note that according to

Xenophon, the king was concerned not only that the satraps had enough capable troops at their disposal but also that they did not have too many soldiers under arms in case they might become too strong. Tuplin (1988: pp. 67–68) adds that the satraps had a number of smaller collections of colonist troops distributed throughout the satrapy that were ready to muster alongside the separate soldiers who were charged with maintaining and defending urban garrisons.

The satrapal armies could be assembled to supplement the royal army if an expedition or major battle was anticipated. An example of a minor satrapal army can be found in Xenophon's *Anabasis* where the satrap of western Armenia attempts to ambush the retreating Greek mercenary army with his own force bolstered by local mercenaries from the Chalybes and Taochi peoples (Xen. *Anab.* 4.4). A satrap was expected to handle minor incursions and disturbances in his province without having to resort to appealing for royal reinforcement, but in cases of major invasions neighboring satraps could unite their local forces and form a relatively powerful temporary coalition. During the Spartan invasion of Persia in 398 BCE, Tissaphernes, satrap of Lydia, and Pharnabazus, satrap of Phrygia, combined their forces to confront the Greek army of Dercyllidas (Xen. *Hellenica* 3.2.12–3.2.18). A larger example of a satrapal coalition was the force assembled to face Alexander of Macedon's invasion of Persia in 334 BCE. Arrian describes the Persian satraps during a war council in which they are reluctant to adopt a scorched earth policy, perhaps due to their remit as protectors of the realm (Arr. *Anab.* 1.13). Yet the satraps were not entirely left to their own defenses. It was possible for a satrap who was threatened by hostile forces to request royal reinforcement, as was the case of Tissaphernes, satrap of Lydia, in 395 BCE (Xen. *Hell.* 3.4.11). But it was more common for satraps to send their troops to the king's aid for a royal expedition or to mount a defense of the realm. Arrian's account of the Persian forces assembled for the battle at Gaugamela includes several satraps present for the muster with troops from their provinces, most notably Bessus, the satrap of Bactria, who commanded the Persian left wing (Arr. *Anab.* 3.8).

An Achaemenid royal army formed a very clear hierarchical structure. The king, or general at the head of the army, would be surrounded by his personal retinue of kinsmen and retainers who would normally be mounted on horseback but could also be present as selected infantry companies. The lesser nobility and their retainers would then form the bulk of the Persian cavalry and the common Persians then made up the infantry. This Persian nucleus was supported by foreign auxiliaries and mercenaries commanded and mustered by the Persian satraps who governed them. The army of Xerxes on the march to Greece illustrates this organization extremely well as the king proceeds surrounded by selected bodies of Persian infantry and cavalry. Behind the retinue of the king comes the main body of Persian troops and following the honored

Persian soldiers at a distance are the auxiliary foreign contingents (Hdt. 7.40–7.41). This distinguished organization is repeated at Cunaxa where the Persians, with their king and his retinue, held the central position whilst the auxiliaries took position on the wings (Xen. *Anab.* 1.8.9–13), and also in the battle at Gaugamela (Arr. *Anab.* 3.11). This system is repeated on a smaller scale by Persian commanders who lead expeditionary forces, as illustrated by Datis at Marathon where the Persians hold the center of the line (Hdt. 6.113). The main exception to this deployment is that of Mardonius at Plataea where the Persian troops were placed on his left wing due to its critical position facing off against the formidable Spartan hoplite army (Hdt. 9.47). But the structural ideal of the Persian army remains as the ethnic Persians are simply given what is judged to be the most critical position in a battle line, or in the case of the circumvention of the Thermopylae defenses, the most critical missions (Hdt. 7.215–7.218). This prestige within the army could also have damaging effects on the morale of a force if the Persians failed in a task, as we see at Plataea where Herodotus remarks that all the hopes of the war rested on the shoulders of the Persian soldiers and their flight from the Spartans heralded the end of the battle for the pro-Persian troops (Hdt. 9.68).

The actual contingents that made up a Persian army appear to have been rigidly organized with a clear chain of command from at least the time of Xerxes. A regiment of troops was recruited to stand up to 10 000 strong according to Herodotus' estimation of the largest Persian contingents that invaded Greece (Hdt. 7.81). He goes on to describe these regiments of 10 000 as divided into 10 companies of 1000, which were further divided into 10 groups of 100, and then 10 squads on 10. Head (1992: p. 17) argues that the repeated presence of companies of 1000 Persian soldiers in Aramaic and Greek sources provides good support for Herodotus' description, including the survival of the Persian word '*hazarapatish*' ('commander of a thousand men') through Greek accounts. Herodotus also reports that the commanders of 10 000 and 1000 would then select commanders for each group of 100 soldiers and within those groups, commanders for the squads of 10. This clear and all-encompassing chain of command provided Persian officers with the means to organize their troops quickly and efficiently even in the heat of battle. At Plataea the cavalry under the overall command of Masistes is reported to have attacked in squadrons rather than en masse (Hdt. 9.22), and the infantry is even described as attacking in groups of ten (Hdt. 9.62). The creation of this chain of command is attributed to Cyrus II by Xenophon, but there is no corroborating evidence for this assertion (Head 1992: p. 17).

According to Herodotus, by the time of Xerxes the command structure included six high marshals (7.82). They would form the advisory body to Xerxes during war councils and could step up to overall command should the Great King depart the expedition. This top-level general staff is seen again in

Persian armies, particularly during the Macedonian invasion where Arrian (*Anab.* 2.6–7), Diodorus (17.30.1–3), and Curtius Rufus (3.8.1–11) describe the decision to move against Alexander at Issus as a matter decided by the king amongst noble Persians and commanders. However, it is not clear how widespread this chain of command was amongst the foreign auxiliaries in the imperial armies. The overall commanders of the foreign divisions appear to always be Persian or Median so as to facilitate better translation of orders, but the hierarchy within foreign contingents was likely to be as diverse as their fighting styles. Due to the Persian ideal of allowing foreign states to maintain their traditional religions and customs, they were also recruited as soldiers fighting in their native fashion. This lack of any attempt to train a unified and cohesive army allowed the Persians to maintain an image of benevolence; it also meant that the quality and capabilities of foreign auxiliaries were varied (Head 1992: p. 16).

Within the Persian elements of the Achaemenid imperial armies there appear to be a number of elite units, the most famous of which are the so-called “Immortals” that Herodotus describes as the finest infantry at Xerxes’ disposal (Hdt. 7.83). Sekunda (1992: pp. 6–7) regards the “Immortals” as the primary regiment of 10 000 Persian infantry, a standing force that was made up of professional soldiers and always maintained at full strength where other regiments would gradually dwindle in numbers over time until they were mustered out of the army. He also differentiates these 10 000 troops from the other 1000-man bodies of elite spearmen that Herodotus describes in the march to Greece (Hdt. 7.40–7.41). Of these smaller selected companies the group that follows directly behind Xerxes is notable for carrying golden apples on their spear pommels and being drawn from the noblest of the Persians. Sekunda (1992: pp. 6–7) believes these “Apple-Bearers” to be the personal bodyguard of the Great King as they are not only the most distinguished troops in the passage but Darius I is also mentioned as a spear-bearer to Cambyses (Hdt. 3.139). These two guard units are particularly worthy of note since they both appear in the armies of Darius III. The “Immortals” are seen again in Curtius Rufus’ description of Darius III’s march to Issus (Curt. Ruf. 3.3.13), although their lack of mention in any of the actual fighting may betray this mention as a reference to Herodotus’ original passage on the march of Xerxes. The “Apple-Bearers” are mentioned by Diodorus (17.59.2–17.59.3) and Arrian (Arr. *Anab.* 3.11) as a royal bodyguard in their accounts of the Persian line at Gaugamela. It is possible, then, that these guard units made up the heart of the Achaemenid military with the levies from the non-professional Persians as support and finally the foreign auxiliaries mustered by the satraps as the main body of troops at the Great King’s disposal.

Head describes the muster of non-professional Persians in the Achaemenid army as “a sort of militia ... not a universal levy, rather a reserve force holding

land in exchange for military service” (Head 1992: p. 12). Using Strabo’s, Herodotus’, and Xenophon’s accounts of Persian military training, Sekunda (1992: p. 5) argues that every Persian male was obligated to serve in the army between the ages of 20 and 24, at which point they would be demobilized but would remain on call for active duty. This interpretation is supported by the many examples of military land grants found in Mesopotamia during Achaemenid rule. Using the evidence from contemporary Babylonian documents, Briant explains the *Ḫaṭru* system of land granted by Achaemenid authority as estates that were given to tenant farmers in exchange for military service (Briant 2002: p. 405). The size of the allotment would also determine the level of military participation required of the tenant as it appears to be the case that the reserve forces were obliged to provide their own military equipment, whilst according to Xenophon (*Xen. Oec.* 4.5–4.6), the garrison forces and professional soldiers were maintained at the expense of the state. Head (1992: pp. 14–15) agrees that the *Ḫaṭru* were used for more than just Persian nationals since many different ethnicities are recorded in Babylonian documentation as holding land grants in Mesopotamia, although it is not always clear whether they provided taxes or troops. Head also points out that very little of the recruitment system is known to us but that the experience of the Macedonians fighting against various satraps and tribal leaders in Bactria suggests that an ad hoc system of tribal loyalty was widespread amongst the Iranian peoples. As for the coastal regions, Wallinga (2005: p. 35) argues that it was the Persian king who ordered the construction of fleets according to requirement and then crewed them with able seamen such as the Phoenicians or Greeks. With this in mind it can be established that the Achaemenids maintained a core of standing troops which was supplemented by garrison forces on active duty throughout the empire. In times of crisis, a levy could be mustered from those Persians who were obliged to serve in the military, as well as from the non-Persians recruited by their satraps.

The logistical arm of the Persian army is less well known than its combat elements. It is first attested by Herodotus in his description of the Persian siege of Sardis (*Hdt.* 1.80). This is, however, only a small description of the camels used in the Persian army’s baggage train. A better picture of the logistical preparations that preceded a campaign can be found in Cambyses’ invasion of Egypt in 525 BCE. Cambyses made sure to utilize intelligence gathered from enemy defectors such as Phanes, a Greek mercenary formerly in the employ of the Pharaoh (*Hdt.* 3. 4). Due to the advice of Phanes, Cambyses was able to plan the necessary logistics for an attack. An alliance was secured with the Arabian king who controlled the lands that led to Egypt and this agreement provided the Persian army with water stashed in caches along the desert route (*Hdt.* 3.9). Cambyses was also informed of the difficulty of attacking Egypt via land alone and thus ensured the submission of

the Phoenician and Cyprian cities with their powerful navies before attacking the Egyptians (Hdt. 3.19). This allowed not only the amphibious transport of his fighting troops but also the use of a sea-borne supply line to support his army alongside the baggage train. But the greatest example of the Persian logistical arm is to be found in Xerxes' invasion of Greece. The system of supply for the imperial army is well described by Herodotus during the Persian march. He reports multiple supply depots stocked with food, water, and fodder for the baggage animals and horses in a similar manner to the caches provided for Cambyses (Hdt. 7.25). Moreover, he also describes the heavy tithe of supply that Xerxes demanded from the nations that he passed through (Hdt. 7.118–7.120). Lazenby (1993: p. 96) argues that although it is implied that there was a large fleet of support ships delivering supplies for Xerxes, it is likely that these supplies were intended for the combat elements of the navy. The success of transporting a large force into Greece without suffering from major supply disasters is a testament to the logistical planning and execution of the Achaemenid army's support staff. Engels (1978: pp. 44–46) goes so far as to suggest that logistics were such a crucial factor to an army's success that Darius III based the deployment of his army on the requirements of supply.

Xerxes also had a large engineering corps at his disposal both during and before the invasion began. The construction of the Athos canal was engineered to allow the navy safer passage through Greece's treacherous coastal waters (Hdt. 7.22), and the bridge of boats across the Hellespont (Hdt. 7.33–7.37) demonstrated the high degree of competence that his engineers possessed. Indeed, boats were also used as a bridge to cross the Danube by Darius I, who highly commended his chief engineer, Mandrocles, for the work (Hdt. 4.87–4.89). Beyond the realm of transportation and supply there was still the corps of combat engineers that the Persians employed for siege work. In the Persian attack on the town of Barca in 516 BCE, Herodotus describes the Persians attempting to undermine the walls of the city by tunneling underneath them (Hdt. 4.200). In Harpagus' campaign against the Ionian cities he is described as constructing mounds of earth in order to overcome the walls of Teos (Hdt. 1.168), and Xerxes ordered a similar mound of earth to be constructed from the mainland to the island of Salamis after his naval defeat in 480 BCE (Hdt. 8.97). Persian logistics were, then, capable of combat operations as well as of supply and transportation.

The Persian military remains a much understudied topic which deserves further scholarly engagement, especially in regard to its strategic and tactical doctrines. This may allow us to form a better understanding of the conquests and defeats of the Achaemenids.

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CHAPTER 81

Military Organization and Equipment

Christopher Tuplin and Bruno Jacobs

General Considerations

The Achaemenid Empire was the product of violent conquest and its survival presupposed the credible threat of military force. But the Persian army is hard to define and describe. Authentic Persian sources are disappointing. Royal monuments eschew active warfare, contenting themselves with images of inactive guards. Royal texts avoid description of fighting, except at Behistun – a formulaic and militarily uninformative narrative. Soldiers appear in Fortification archive texts, but straightforward cases are few and neither they nor speculative ones say much germane. More helpful are sealings on Fortification and Treasury documents with images of armed men. But searchers for the soldiers of the Achaemenid dispensation must also look to (i) other pictorial sources, (ii) documentary sources from Bactria, Babylonia, the Levant and Egypt, and (iii) the narratives of Persian imperial history in classical texts.

One such text may seem an obvious *entrée*: Herodotus' catalog of Xerxes' invasion force (7.61–7.98). But this is extremely problematic. The army that attacked Greece was reportedly organized into nation-based contingents (7.60; for this cf. Hdt. 4.87; Xen., *An.* 1.8.9; Arr., *An.* 2.8.8; Diod. 11.2.1; 11.8.1; 17.19.4; 17.58.1; Nep., *Dat.* 8), and the number of nations is large (46). The military diversity is less than this might suggest: for example, most (non-Indian) people east of the Zagros represent one of two models (west and east Iranian), one more heavily armed than the other. But diversity there

undoubtedly is, some of it rather folkloristic – fighters with pelts, clubs, wooden helmets, or crane-skin shields. Taken literally, this is an army vulnerable to poor internal communication and lack of operational cohesion.

But the catalog (though perhaps containing responsibly sourced material) is not to be taken at face value. As a list of nations, it rearranges the 20 tribute *nomoi* of 3.89–3.94 (also contentious), and Armayor (1978) already questioned its historical integrity, while Briant (1999: p. 119) saw its folkloristic elements as merely a parade contingent for ideological display. Actual narratives of battles involving royal armies present a more sober picture, without precluding ethnically labeled contingents (Gaugamela is a well-documented case). At the same time, organization of any particular battle array is determined by topography, tactics, and appropriate positioning of cavalry, chariots, archers, and spearmen. That battle array may be viewed as a collection of troop types or of national groups, and the relationship between these perspectives probably varies from occasion to occasion – though there will be ongoing associations between troop type and region (e.g. northeastern satrapies and cavalry) – but in trying to characterize a typical Persian army our real interest is in the range of forms each basic troop type might take in real combat situations and (specifically) in the distinctively “Persian” forms that might have formed the core.

In the second half of Achaemenid history, satrapal and royal armies defending Persian interests regularly included Greek mercenaries. That is a capital fact about military recruitment and prompts questions about the perceived advantages of such soldiers, but (beyond the consequences of addressing such questions) Greek infantry equipment is not this chapter’s business: Greek foot soldiers may be typical of Persian armies, but it is misleading simply to call them Persian soldiers. Nor is this just because they are Greek. Chaldaean, Chalybian, and Taochian mercenaries (Xen., *An.* 4.3.4; 4.4.18) are no different in principle. Nor are native non-mercenary soldiers locally levied in Lydia, Phrygia, Egypt, or Babylonia (Tuplin 2016). The Achaemenids might have mobilized all sorts of military resources from the territory they controlled, as might any superpower controlling that territory. The diversity of the Herodotean army list has a certain poetic justice. But our starting point must be with soldiers that enter the picture because it was precisely *Persians* who were the salient superpower. For, if there is such a thing as the Persian army (a virtual entity transcending particular events), it consists in the conjunction of distinctive products of a Persian dispensation (at its narrowest, soldiers from Persia itself) with other resources, typologically similar (from other Iranian peoples) or dissimilar (from other areas). Of course, particular soldiers of distinctively Persian type might or might not be Persians or even Iranians: debate about the ethnic identity of the protagonist on the Çan sarcophagus (Jacobs 2014: pp. 353–355) is a separate issue from recognition that he is a

“Persian soldier” insofar as he is a member of the empire’s elite equipped in a manner fitting for a Persian army – a figure that could never have appeared on a monument from northwest Anatolia were it not for the existence of the Achaemenid Empire.

The characteristics of Persian soldiers can theoretically be inferred from: (i) written texts about Persian or Median soldiers; (ii) mural images of armed men at Persepolis and Susa; (iii) other images in which soldiers are identifiable as Persian because of overlap with the first two categories and/or other indicators including (where combat is shown) the identity of the adversaries. The sources for the first category are in practice largely Greco-Roman. Texts from other environments rarely *describe* soldiers and, when they do, do not necessarily describe Persian ones. The Murašu text itemizing the equipment of the cavalryman Gadai-iaha going to Uruk in fulfillment of a royal order is well-known (Kuhrt 2007: pp. 14, 38). But does it describe a Persian or a Babylonian soldier? Gadai-iaha is not Iranian, the service obligation affects horse land in Nippur, and the equipment terminology is challenging, but some detect resonances with better-established examples of Persian cavalry (Casabonne and Gabrielli 2007). The sources for the last category include seal-stones/sealings of various provenance, coins, and paintings and relief sculpture from funerary or other monuments in the Levant, Western Anatolia, and Greece (Tuplin 2010: pp. 104–120; 2020). Such material is not characteristically produced by or specifically for Persians, and its documentary integrity may be variable. Monuments with salient pictorial representations cited below include the Alexander Sarcophagus (von Graeve 1970), Attic vases (Raeck 1981), the Athena Nike frieze (Harrison 1972), the Çan sarcophagus (Sevinç et al. 2001), Clazomenae sarcophagi (Cook 1981), the Karaburun tomb painting (Mellink 1972; Miller 2010), the Limyra heroon frieze (Borchhardt 1976) and equestrian monument base (Borchhardt and Ruggendorfer 2001), the Miho pectoral (Bernard 2000), the Nereid Monument (Childs and Demargne 1989), the Payava sarcophagus (Demargne 1974), and the Tatarlı tomb painting (Summerer and von Kienlin 2010. For seal-stone combat images see Tuplin 2020).

Basic Clothing

Pictorial source material reveals a fundamental distinction between figures wearing the “Persian robe” and those wearing riding costume (tunic and trousers) – Herodotus’ “Median” dress (1.135; 7.62; Jacobs 1994). The former is very much more common among soldiers at Persepolis, and the robe may have been acceptable for ceremonial guard duty, but it is hard to believe it was worn in battle (Tuplin 2013: pp. 229–230). The possibility is never entertained in

Attic vase painting or relief sculpture from the western empire (or in narrative texts), but it does occur at Tatarlı (on a crowned figure) and in a number of seal-stone images (with various headgear: Tuplin 2020: pp. 352, 366–367). The robe is, of course, the garment of the king, the royal/heroic protagonist of face-to-face encounters with beasts and monsters (Figure 55.4), a trope reflected in some seal-stone combat scenes (Figure 21.6; 56.1b) and at Tatarlı (Tuplin 2020, pp. 354–355), and the armed figure on darics/*sigloi* (Kuhrt 2007: fig. 11.35; here Figures 57.2–57.6), and its appearance in military combat has a symbolic quality resonant with these parallels. Seal-stones combining it with the heavy cuirass and close-fitting headgear proper to trouser-wearing infantry display a peculiarly extreme intersection of symbol and reality.

We may take it that trousers were the norm for Persian soldiers in real warfare (Hdt. 5.49). With what regularity and intention these and the accompanying tunics were variegated by color or other decoration we do not know. Xen., *Cyr.* 8.3.3 envisages different colors in a ceremonial context. Hdt. 7.83 and Curtius 3.3.13 note the Immortals' opulent appearance; and Herodotus 8.113 assigns all Mardonius' Persians necklaces and armbands. The phenomenon attracted Greek criticism (Plut., *Aristid.* 16; Curt. 3.2.12; 3.3.14; 3.10.9–10.10). For speculation about unit differentiation by color/design see Sekunda 1992. That differently colored *epithorakidia* could differentiate friend and foe is noted by Plutarch *Artoxerxes* 11 (Jacobs 1994: pp. 148–149). The *kandys*, a long coat with false sleeves, does not appear in combat images (though other cloaks sometimes appear on Attic vases and items showing strong Greek influence), but it will have been worn at other times: cf. the principal rider on the Limyra heroon frieze (Borchhardt 1976) or Darius at Issus (Arr., *An.* 2.11.5).

Offensive Weapons

Axes are poorly attested textually (Xen., *An.* 4.4.17) but appear in the hands of the king's weapon-bearer (Walser 1980: pl. 42, 44), on several seal-stones (normally carried in the back of an infantryman's cuirass but once used to execute a prisoner), and on some Attic vases (though only twice in use). They may have figured originally in combat scenes on the Alexander Sarcophagus and the Athena Nike balustrade. Slingers, by contrast, are well attested textually from the late fifth century BCE (Xen., *An.* 3.3.6, 15–17; 3.4.17; 7.8.18; *Oec.* 4.5; *Cyr.* 1.1.5; Nep., *Dat.* 8; Curt. 3.9.1; 4.4.15; 5.3.19; 5.6.18; 5.8.3; 7.6.2; Diod. 17.59, 110; Polyæn. 4.3.27; Strab. 15.3.19) but are absent from pictorial sources, at least in the hands of apparent Persian soldiers. (Achaemenid era sling bullets: Foss 1975; Weiss 1997; Brelaz 2007. But the slingers were not necessarily Persians.)

Swords/daggers come in various forms. A dagger with a distinctive asymmetrical scabbard (Figure 81.1) carried slantwise in the belt of the Persian robe (Yoyotte 2010: p. 261 fig. 282–83; *here* Figure 94.8; Walser 1980: pl. 59–63, 75, 107 etc.; *here* Figure 94.6) is perhaps shown in use by quasi-royal figures at Tatarlı, on a combat seal (BM 132505), and on Type IV darics/*sigloi* (Kuhrt 2007: fig. 11.35; *here* Figure 57.5), though only the first has a scabbard and it is rather inaccurately represented. More important is the *akinakes*, a short weapon associated with the riding costume (Figures 50.1 and 55.5). The sheath hung from the belt and was tied to the leg, as we see from illustrations, read in Pollux 1.138, and might infer from Hdt. 7.61 (a detached sheath tip could be dangerous, as Cambyzes discovered: Hdt. 3.64). The *akinakes* appears alongside clothing and jewelry among royal gifts (Xen., *An.* 1.2.27; 1.8.29; Hdt. 8.120; *here* Figure 50.2), is often associated with non-battlefield contexts – good for assassinations and brawls, though hardly, despite Polybius, fr. 54, lion killing – and is only occasionally visible on combat images (Tuplin 2020: pp. 353, 354, 369). Nonetheless it *is* a real military weapon. Its wide incidence among Iranians is evident from the subjects on royal tomb facades (Kuhrt 2007: fig. 11.5; *here* Figure 94.4) but not reflected in Herodotus’ army catalog.

The *akinakes* is not the only salient sword type. Many sources refer to *sagareis*, *makhairai* or *kopides* (slashing swords) in the hands of cavalry and infantry



Figure 81.1 Persepolis, So-called Apadana, Eastern stairway, Delegation 2, detail (DAI Abt. Teheran, W Neg. KB 63-28).

(Xen., *An.* 1.8.7; 4.4.17; *Cyr.* 1.2.13; 2.1.9; 2.1.16; 2.3.17; 4.5.58; 5.2.1; 7.1.2; *RE* 12.11; Arr., *An.* 1.15.8; Plut., *Alex.* 16; Strab. 15.3.9), and they appear occasionally on Clazomenae sarcophagi (Cook 1981: G1, G11: horse-men) and seal-stone images (Tuplin 2020: pp. 348, 353, 369: infantry), and are rather common on Attic vase paintings (infantry). At Granicus, cavalrymen throw spears and then attack with swords (Arr., *An.* 1.15–16; Diod. 17.20); but sword-wielding horsemen are pictorially rare (Samaritan coin: Mildenberg 1993: pl. 7.29; Meshorer and Qedar 1999: nos. 15, 40). Diodorus 17.53 says swords were lengthened before Gaugamela, and Curtius 3.3.6 claims Darius adjusted the *akinakes* sheath to a Greek model – two different versions of a basic idea that Persians belatedly sought to match their adversaries’ weapons. Oddly, Xenophon had already said (*An.* 1.8.7) that Persian cavalry used Greek *makhairai*.

For Darius, spear and bow were the weapons in whose use a Persian should excel (DNb §9), and the spear’s importance is evident from the observation that the “spear of the Persian man” went far (DNa §4). There are more spears than bows at Persepolis (Figures 81.2, 81.3, and 94.7), and elite infantrymen were “apple-bearers” (Hdt. 7.41; Heraclid. 689 F1; Arr., *An.* 3.11.5; Diod. 17.59.3) because of a feature of their spears – a special version of a feature perhaps found more widely. The Greek stereotype in which Hellenic spearmen confronted Persian archers (Aesch., *Pers.* 239–240, 803–822; Hdt. 9.62–9.63) is misleading (Konijnendijk 2012), and was not even much exploited in Attic vase painting, though the bow *was* a standard battlefield weapon for Persians



Figure 81.2 Persepolis, So-called Apadana, Eastern stairway, Inside parapet, Soldiers (DAI Abt. Teheran, Neg. R-1981-609).



Figure 81.3 Persepolis, Hall of 100 Columns, Door jamb, Soldier (Photo Jacobs 96-5-18).

in a way it was not for Greeks: hence the Cunaxa army, for example, divides into cavalry, shield-bearers, and archers (Xen., *An.* 1.8.9).

Spears are omnipresent in textual and iconographic sources, used both by infantry and cavalry and as both thrusting and throwing weapons. Actual spear heads of both types are known from Persepolis, and Deve Hüyük (Schmidt 1957: pl. 76; Moorey 1980: pp. 60–64). Herodotus (5.49, 97; 7.61, 211) intimates that Persian (infantry) spears were shorter than Greek, and Diodorus 17.53 claims that spears, not just swords, were lengthened before Gaugamela. But Attic vase painters do not reflect such claims, and other iconographic data do not obviously validate them: pictures at Persepolis and Naqš-i Rostam *do* make Persian spears look longer than those of some subject peoples, but unfortunately there are no spear-carrying Yaunā. Of course, even a small *differentia* could be significant. Greek sources regularly call the cavalryman's spear a *palton* (Xen., *An.* 1.8.27; *RE* 12.12; *Hell.* 3.4.14; *Cyr.* 1.2.9; 4.3.9, 12; 6.2.16; 7.1.2; 8.8.22; Arr., *An.* 1.15.2, 5), though *akontion* is also used (e.g. Hdt. 9.17, 43), and they sometimes indicate that he carried two (Xen., *An.* 1.5.15; 1.8.3; *Hell.* 3.4.14; *RE* 12.12; *Cyr.* 1.2.9). This also happens in the Murašu document cited earlier, but the phenomenon is rare in relevant iconographic evidence (Tuplin 2020: p. 349), where riders normally wield a single spear as a thrusting weapon, and cavalrymen regularly have a single *palton* in Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* (6.2.16; 7.1.2; 8.8.22).

Bows appear with two different quivers. In one model – attested at Susa and Persepolis and on seal-stones and coins, characteristically with the Persian robe – the soldier has a quiver hanging from his shoulder and when not using his bow, slips it over his arm so that quiver and bow are adjacent (Figure 81.3; cf. Figure 94.7). In the other model the soldier uses a combined bow-and-arrow case normally carried at the hip (Hdt. 7.61; Figures 50.1–50.2, 55.5, 56.2a, and 74.1). This object (*isuva-* in Persian, *apte* in Elamite: DNd; PF 1560) is now normally called a *gorytos*, although the word first appears in Homer (*Od.* 21.54) and is rarely used in Persian contexts, and our evidence about it is essentially pictorial. The *gorytos* is characteristically associated with riding costume – though some “nobles” on the Apadana frieze wear Persian robes but have a *gorytos* – and is thus appropriate to cavalymen as well as to foot soldiers (Figure 94.6). But although examples of the former appear on the Athena Nike frieze, Attic vase paintings, Clazomenae sarcophagi, the Tatarlı painting, and occasional seal-stones (combat: Tuplin 2020: pp. 369, 423, 440; non-combat: Legrain 1951: nos. 772–773; BE 8.107 [Balzer 2007: D1a.5]; Bregstein 1993: no. 167 [Balzer 2007: U4b.9]) and coins (Casabonne 2004: Pl. 2.10; Debord 1999: VII 2), they are relatively rare (the Miho Persian horse archer has no *gorytos*, whereas his adversary does). This is unsurprising, as images of Persian horse archers in military contexts are rare, and their incidence in texts only modest (Hdt. 9.49; Xen., *An.* 3.3.10; *Cyr.* 4.3.12, 7.1.39; DNb does envisage the king shooting his bow on horseback). The *gorytos* is worn by many Persian infantrymen on Attic vase paintings, but not often in other media – one may note figures at Limyra (Zahle 1979: p. 343 no. 66) and Taymā’ (Jacobs and Macdonald 2009; *here* Figure 38.1) – and neither on Attic vases nor (especially) elsewhere are Persian foot soldiers frequently shown shooting arrows at human adversaries. The Tatarlı painting, with 11 Persian warriors, of whom 10 shoot bows, is exceptional.

Persian bows were large (Hdt. 7.61; Xen., *An.* 3.4.16) and distinctive (Xen., *An.* 4.4.17), though how is unstated: they outshot Cretan archers, but the latter reused Persian arrows, so their bows were not radically different in type/size (3.4.16–3.4.17). The “Median” bows at Hdt. 7.66 should not logically differ from those of the Persian contingent (cf. 7.61–7.62), but many other Iranians are assigned distinct “native” styles of bow. Pictorial evidence pertinent to Persians offers two models. Both are recurve bows, but in one the overall profile is a simple convex curve, while in the other it is recessed around the hand-hold, producing a reversed-sigma effect. Both types appear at Tatarlı, the former wielded by infantry, the latter by cavalry as well as by the Persians’ adversaries. Elsewhere the first type is characteristic of Susa guards and their Persepolitan equivalents (Zutterman 2003 thinks the latter have a smaller sub-type) and appears on several vase paintings and most combat-image seal-stones that figure a bow (Tuplin 2020: pp. 368–369), while the other type appears on the Miho jewel, is preferred on vase paintings (the sigma effect is not

always pronounced) but is less common on seal-stones – and never seen on royal monuments. Since the more elongated model accompanies the shoulder quiver and Persian robe, the other model belongs with the *gorytos*. Attic vase painters sometimes get this wrong, since the shoulder quiver is unknown to them. When Herodotus 7.61 speaks of “large” bows but of quivers worn at the waist he may be guilty of a similar category confusion. Zutterman 2003: p. 139 suggests Persians also used a smaller antecedent to the Parthian-era Baguz (Yrzi) bow, but the evidence seems debatable. In any event, the bows they did use were equal or superior to those of earlier Near Eastern powers (Zutterman 2003: p. 148).

Defensive Weapons

Hdt. 9.63 sees Persians as light-armed troops compared with hoplites. Actual light-armed troops occasionally appear in satrapal forces (Nep., *Dat.* 8; Polyæn. 7.27.1; Hell. Oxy. 14.4,6; Diod. 14.99; cf. Ctes. 688 F9[5]), though whether these are Persian is debatable. In any case, as a general categorization of Persian fighters (Diod. 14.23) “light-armed” risks misapprehension. The general thrust of *Cyropaedia* is that Persians had more solid troops than other easterners.

Pictorial evidence records four shields: (i) a large, nearly man-high rectilinear shield made of vertical poles or narrow planks (Persepolis doorways, some vase-paintings: Head 1992: fig. 9); (ii) a figure-of-eight shield (a few guard figures at Persepolis: Schmidt 1953: pl. 22, 25A, 26A, 62F; Head 1992: fig. 6d; *here* Figure 81.2); (iii) half-moon *peltai*: the most common type on vase paintings (sometimes with wicker effect); also seen on the Alexander sarcophagus (von Graeve 1970: pl. 27–30; Head 1992: fig. 29bc). Some think this is a real Persian weapon (Sekunda 1992: pp. 21–22), others may suspect a purely iconographic borrowing from Scythian-Amazonian imagery: cf. Miller 2011; (iv) a round shield, seen on the Alexander Sarcophagus (von Graeve 1970: pl. 32–34, 42, 44–45; Head 1992: fig. 29), a couple of vase paintings, the Kinch Tomb (Pfrommer 1998: pl. 27), a Samarian coin (Meshorer and Qedar 1999: no. 50). In the textual evidence Herodotus’ Persians have no *aspides* (5.97, 7.61) – the word for a Greek shield – but only *gerrha*, a term he later uses for objects that make a wall to shelter archers (9.61–9.62, 99, 102). Xenophon calls these “large *gerrha*” (*Cyr.* 8.5.10). Ordinary *gerrhon*-carriers (*Oec.* 4.5; *An.* 1.8.9; *Cyr. passim*) evidently carry something more like ordinary shields (and appropriate to cavalry as well as to infantry: 4.5.58). Since all Herodotean Persians carry *gerrha* but only some can have formed a shield wall, one wonders whether others carried smaller *gerrha*. Other authors occasionally ascribe *aspides* to Persians (Arr., *An.* 2.11.6; 3.15.5; 7.13.2; Diod. 11.7.2–11.7.3) or envisage Persian peltasts (Xen., *Cyr.*

5.3.38–5.3.41; 5.5.3; 6.3.24–6.3.26; 8.5.10; Ctes. 688 F9; Heraclid. 689 F2; Plut., *Art.* 24; Diod. 11.7.2–11.7.3). Xenophon sometimes implicitly pictures peltasts with *gerrha* (*Cyr.* 1.2.13; 1.5.5; 2.1.9, 16), so peltasts and *ger-rhophoroi* may not be fundamentally different, even if not all small *gerrha* were half-moons. (Strabo 15.3.19 calls them rhomboid.) We do not know whether Persians ever used a bossed shield resembling the head gear of so-called *Yaunā takabarā* (Rollinger 2006), or what characterized the *tukšu* attributed to Iranian troops in the Nabonidus Chronicle iii 16. That horsemen carried shields (textually attested, but not pictorially, unless on a “Persian Rider” figure from Memphis: Petrie 1909: pl.xxix.84) is doubtful (Tuplin 2010: pp. 169–170).

Herodotus assigns Persians scale-covered cuirasses (7.61; 9.22; Strab. 15.3.19), claiming this imitated Egyptian practice (1.135), and armor scales do survive at Persepolis (Schmidt 1957: pl. 77) and Pasargadae (Stronach 1978: fig. 96). The apparent imputation of 8.113 that Immortals were *not* cuirass-wearers (perhaps even that few *were* in that class) is disconcerting. In Xenophon, the cuirass is a feature of infantry (*Cyr.* 1.2.13; 2.1.9, 16; 2.3.17; 6.3.24; 7.1.10; 7.5.3 and 8.5.11–12 even speak of *hoplitai*) and cavalry (Xen., *Cyr.* 4.3.9; 4.5.58; 7.1.2; 8.8.22; *An.* 1.8.9, 26; 3.4.35; cf. Diod. 14.22.6; Plut., *Artox.* 9, 11); in the Alexander historians, of cavalry (Arr., *An.* 1.15.2, 5, 8; 2.11.3; Diod. 17.20.5; Plut., *Alex.* 16) but not infantry, apart from the “hoplite” Cardaces (below). Pictorial evidence offers a distinctive cuirass with neck guard worn by cavalry (Çan, Miho, and several seal-stones [Tuplin 2020: pp. 366, 367, 369, 386] – but in others the neck guard seems to be missing) and infantry (seal-stones only). This model – distinct from the thing in Xen., *RE* 12.2, for which cf. a non-Persian figure from Bozkir: Sekunda 1992: p. 95 – is ignored by Attic vase painters, though may occur in the Alexander Mosaic (Pfrommer 1998: p. 77 n. 518). The Çan example was leather-covered wicker (Sevinç et al. 2001: p. 395 Fig. 12), and there were no scales. For that one looks to an Attic vase (Raeck 1981: P580: infantry) and the tentative restoration of a Persian-garbed figure from Limyra (Borchhardt and Ruggendorfer 2001); but other vase paintings put Persians in Greek-style cuirasses, as do the Alexander sarcophagus (Gable D) and Nereid Monument (BM 879). Arm and leg protectors (cf. Xen., *RE* 12.5) may be discerned on non-combat figures on a Cilician coin (Mildenberg 1993: pl. 11.92; Casabonne 2004: pl. 3.23), a vase painting of an Amazon (Sekunda 1992: p. 28), and two seals (Collon 1987: no. 741; Sekunda 1992: p. 49). More certain is the appearance at Karaburun, Yeniceköy, and Xanthus (Bernard 1964) of the horseman’s thigh guard (*parameridion*) of which Xenophon speaks (*RE* 12.8, *An.* 1.8.7; *Cyr.* 7.1.2; cf. 6.1.50, 6.4.1, 8.8.22), while the horse’s forehead and chest protector (also in Xenophon) have been detected on some terracotta “Persian riders” (e.g. Erlich 2006: p. 47) – a problematic category

(Moorey 2000; Tuplin 2010: pp. 107–108) – and the Çan sarcophagus (Sevinç et al. 2001: p. 396, fig. 11–12). The Issus horsemen whose heavy armament hampered flight (Arr., *An.* 2.11.3) presumably had the full range of helmet, cuirass, and other accoutrements. But the horses with scale armor in Curtius 3.11.15, 4.9.3 arguably represent a late Achaemenid model more intimately connected with Central Asia (Arr., *An.* 3.13.4). We touch here on the antecedents of Parthian cataphracts (Potts 2007. For the implications of armor for breeds of horse used by the Persian military see Gabrielli 2006: pp. 25–34).

Herodotus ascribes Persian infantrymen a form of soft hat he calls the *tiara* (7.61). This corresponds to a headgear associated with the Iranian riding costume, and – in many variants – widely represented in pictorial evidence. But there are other possibilities. Herodotus (7.84: strangely circumlocutory) and Xenophon (*An.* 1.8.9; *Cyr.* 7.1.2) indicate that Persian cavalrymen had metal helmets (cf. the Muraşu text above; and perhaps Diod. 17.83.5; Curt. 7.4.33), and *Cyr.* 6.4.1 *might* imply infantry sometimes did too. Military wearers of the Persian robe at Susa and Persepolis have a rope-like diadem (perhaps Herodotus’ Cissian *mitra*; *here* Figure 94.7), a feather crown (Figure 81.3), or a low, plain head band. Similar things occur on coins (Casabonne 2004: fig. 2.4, 9; 3.3; Debord 1999: pl. VII 4, 5; VIII 6) and seal-stones (PTS 24; Frankfort 1939: pl. XXXVIIc; von der Osten 1934: no. 462; Boardman 2007: fig. 289, pl. 877; Ghirshman 1964: fig. 330), where we also find a close-fitting cap of rounded profile, especially alongside the neck-guard cuirass (Tuplin 2020: p. 366). Seal-stone cavalrymen with neck-guard cuirass (and trousers), by contrast, often have close-fitting headgear of square profile, seen also on the Çan sarcophagus, where it may be reinforced leather (Sevinç et al. 2001: p. 395 Fig. 12). There is an infantry/cavalry distinction here that is unreflected in written sources: admittedly the Miho cavalryman does not entirely conform, the headgear being slightly rounded. One seal-stone horseman is given a Greek-style crested *pilos* (Tuplin 2020: pp. 336–337, 367) – possibly an artistic sport, but conceivably justified by the quasi-conical headgear on the Yeniceköy stele (Nollé 1992: F5), a similar thing lost at Marathon (Head fig. 17[a]), and Xenophon’s helmets with white crests (*Cyr.* 7.1.2). The “tower-like felt hat” (*pilēma purgōton*) in Strab. 15.3.19, where we expect a Herodotean *tiara*, is puzzling.

The Elements of an Army

Discussion of clothing and equipment disaggregates military events, which involve an intersection of equipment, troop types and tactical deployment. How were Persian fighting forces constituted and used on the battlefield?

One answer is that they must include distinctively Persian soldiers but might include distinctively non-Persian and non-Iranian ones. This is true not only of armies from the center (e.g. Hdt. 6.43, 95; Diod. 11.60, 75): Aristagoras' expedition against Naxos (Hdt. 5.32) or Aryandes' against Cyrene/Barca (4.167) are examples, as is Autophradates' army (Nep., *Dat.* 8), and intra-satrapy defensive forces probably characteristically mixed Persians – especially (not necessarily entirely: cf. Xen., *Hell.* 3.2.16) cavalry – and others (Tuplin 2016). Our focus here is on Persians, but so far as use goes, narratives rarely say anything that individuates the performance of the others: the report that Sacan cavalry excelled at Plataea (Hdt. 9.71) characteristically corresponds to nothing in the actual narrative. Sometimes the secondary importance of the variegated mass of soldiers is explicit (Arr., *An.* 2.8.8), but once a battle narrative begins, ethnicity normally recedes behind troop type as the organizing principle. (A partial exception is “mercenary,” which may have ethnic implications, though they are not always articulated.)

Scythe-bearing chariots appear at Cunaxa (1.7.10; 1.8.10, 20), Gaugamela (Arr., *An.* 3.8.6; Diod. 17.53; Curt. 4.9.4; 4.12.9–4.12.12; 4.15.14–4.15.17; Front. 2.3.19; FGrH 151 F1 [12–13]), and in a skirmish near Dascylium (Xen., *Hell.* 4.1.17–4.1.19), and figure as a novel military resource in *Cyropaedia* (6.1.27–6.1.30; 7.1.29–7.1.32). Their effectiveness as a means of disrupting the enemy's battle order seems limited: Xen., *An.* 1.8.20; Arr., *An.* 3.13.5–3.13.6; Diod. 17.57.5–17.57.6; 17.58.2–17.58.5; Curt. 4.15.14–4.15.17 (see Nefiodkin 2004, for whom – following Xenophon, Nic.Dam. 90 F66 [31] and Arr., *Tact.* 19 – the scythe chariot is a Persian invention). Contemporary pictorial evidence does not show such chariots. Instead at Tatarlı the chariot is a fighting platform for archers, and at Limyra a conveyance for Perikle (Borchhardt and Ruggendorfer 2001) – and it was both for Darius at Issus and Gaugamela (Arr., *An.* 2.11.5; 3.15.5; Plut., *Alex.* 20; Diod. 17.34.3; 17.60.1; Curt. 3.11.7; 4.15.30).

The chariot's varied character and function has parallels in other army elements. In the case of infantry we note (i) the 10 000 “Immortals” and smaller elite groups with spear butts formed as pomegranates/apples (Hdt. 7.41), (ii) the Cardaces, and (iii) the broad distinction between archers and spearmen.

At Thermopylae, Immortals are deployed only when Medes and Elamites fail (Hdt. 7.211), and are equally unsuccessful at uphill attack on a restricted front. Their contribution is not clearly delineated at Plataea (if they *were* central, this may be partly an accident of pre-battle maneuvers and distinctive topography), and thereafter Immortals as such disappear from battle narratives, rendering discussion of their tactical function problematic. But the Apple-bearers with Darius at Gaugamela (Arr., *An.* 3.11.5; 3.16.1) should be a subsection or a separate unit recruited from their number, and the 40 000 infantry

and 3000 bodyguard cavalry with him at Issus (Curt. 3.9.4) sound like an inflated version of the royal entourage in Hdt. 7.41 and may include the Immortals (cf. 3.3.13 for their continued existence). At Cunaxa, by contrast, we only hear of cavalry with the king (1.7.11; 1.8.24): this is a particular case of the surprising absence of Immortals and Apple-bearers in Xenophon – unless the former appear untitled in *Cyr.* 7.5.68. The royal “patrolling army” of Isocrates 4.145 perhaps had Immortals as its core. The idea that not all Persian troops were of equal status/quality is already assumed in Hdt. 9.31. The role of the 1000 Apple-bearers as the king’s most personal guard reflects their commander’s role as principal controller of access to the king (Keaveney 2010). It is reasonable to assume some link between these elite units and soldiers depicted at Susa and Persepolis (some archer-spearmen, others just spearmen), though precise identifications can only be speculative.

Cardaces are encountered in narrative sources only in Nepos, *Datames* 8 (foot soldiers, slingers), and, as “barbarian hoplites,” in Arrian’s account of Issus (Arr., *An.* 2.8.6). Strabo (15.3.18) associates the name with young Persians undergoing military training, Hellenistic sources report Cardaces in Seleucid armies (Polyb. 5.79.11; 5.82.11; Segre 1938: p. 150), and lexicographers gloss them as guards, mercenaries, or soldiers undefined by nation/locality (Photius s.v., Hesychius s.v., Eustathius ad *Iliad* 2.289). We might infer that Cardaces were recruited from across ethnic groups into uniformly trained barbarian infantry regiments (Briant 1999: pp. 120–122; 2002: pp. 1036–1037). Charles (2012), meanwhile, assimilates them to the (provincial) archers, slingers, and *gerrhophoroi* of Xen., *Oec.* 4.5. Either way, their rare appearance is puzzling, their equipment is presumably of standard Persian sort (but unknown in detail: Callisthenes (FGrH 124 F35) *may* imply they could be categorized as peltasts as well as hoplites), and they may have been annihilated at Issus (see further Tuplin 2014).

Herodotus imagined Median infantry divided into spearmen and archers (1.103), but the Susa guardsman is both, as are the Persians of Hdt. 7.61 and other pictorially-attested figures (primarily those following the Susa Guard model; *here* Figure 94.7), as well as the royal hero of Type III darics/*sigloi* (Kuhrt 2007: fig. 11.35; *here* Figure 57.4). Moreover, the men who fire from behind a shield wall also fight hand to hand (Hdt. 9.62). But Xenophon distinguishes between *gerrhon* carriers and archers at Cunaxa and in *Oec.* 4.5 (adding slingers), and between cuirass wearers and peltasts/archers in *Cyropaedia*; Heraclides 689 F2 has *doruphoroi* and peltasts at the royal court, and the pictorial evidence outside Susa/Persepolis invites a distinction between cuirass wearers and others, though this does not map simply onto a non-archer/archer distinction, partly because of the comparative paucity of bow users in military images. In Herodotus there is a tactical distinction between those who use *gerrha* to create a shield wall and those (more numerous) who

fire arrows from behind. The shield wall disappears after Mycale, but Xenophon (*Cyr.* 6.3.23–6.3.24) imagines a battle order in which archers and spearmen shoot from behind a line of cuirass wearers (cf. 8.5.12). In reality, notwithstanding Dieneses' witticism (Hdt. 7.226), the arrow barrage is not especially effective at Marathon (the Athenian run neutralized it), Cunaxa (the enemy fled before the Greeks were in bow shot: Xen., *An.* 1.8.19), or Issus (Arr., *An.* 2.10.3; Diod. 17.33), and the primary impression created by battle-order descriptions is of distinct categories of effective troops being adjacent to one another, so that (Arr., *An.* 3.11.3) cavalry and infantry might be intermixed. Of course, ineffective troops were behind the main line (Arr., *An.* 2.8.8) and chariots in front of it as at Cunaxa and Gaugamela. Curtius' javelin throwers and slingers in front of the main line at Issus (3.9.5) are aberrant. The "separate" cavalry at Plataea (Hdt. 9.32) is hard to relate to the battle narrative. When harassing the enemy from a distance, archers and javelin throwers have a significant role. Otherwise ballistics are not demonstrably strategically central. The lance and sword mattered as much as the bow.

There were elite cavalry units (Hdt. 7.41; Curt. 4.9.7, 25; 4.12.1, 18; Diod. 17.59.2), but nothing indicates that they had special military characteristics. Pictorial evidence suggests a general distinction between heavy and light cavalry: the distinguishing feature is the cuirass, shown in some actual combat scenes but not in others, and never seen elsewhere – the iconic charging horseman on West Anatolian tetradrachms of late Achaemenid times (Mildenberg 1993: fig. 13.116–13.123) is unarmored. Textual evidence indicates that cavalry might skirmish or attack an adversary head-on. But does this distinction, explicit in Arr., *An.* 3.15.1–3.15.2 and implicit elsewhere, reify a pictorial distinction of cavalry type that is not at all plain in those narratives? Arguably not (Tuplin 2010: pp. 165–171), at least where properly Persian cavalry is concerned. But Iranian-style cavalry might also be Sacan, Hyrcanian, Bactrian, Median, Dahan, or Arachosian (Hdt. 8.113; 9.71; Xen., *An.* 7.8.15; Diod. 17.19.4; Arr., *An.* 3.10.3; Curt. 4.11.6–4.11.7), and typological variation was possible – Scythians could be heavily armored (Arr., *An.* 3.13.4), Hyrcanians perhaps were not (Xen., *Cyr.* 4.2.21) – so a strictly Persian perspective may be misleading here. At the same time cavalry use in pictorial images varies little with difference in armament (except that the rare cavalry-archers are not heavily cuirassed); and the message about real-world tactics to take from images of a single horseman attacking a single foot soldier or the horseman's occasional accompaniment by a light-armed companion (Karaburun, Çan, Miho) is debatable. Cavalry does figure in a good proportion of recorded military actions; and, by contemporary Greek (and perhaps other) standards, it sometimes formed a very high proportion of the fighting men present, as at "Second Marathon" (sch. Dem. 4.19), Granicus, and perhaps Gaugamela. But there is little sign of tactical imagination or of flexibility or

specialization in the combination of cavalry with other arms (the latter often ill-defined anyway); and although narratives of Granicus, Issus, and Gaugamela may over-privilege the cavalry, one suspects that fine-tuning such combinations was not a special consideration. But, in truth, the evidence is simply not granular enough for us to be sure. The contrast between Diodorus' Issus, where the entire front is apparently cavalry – as at Centrites (Xen., *An.* 4.3.3) or Granicus – and other sources, where it is not, typifies the challenge of analyzing Persian battle tactics.

The Persian approach to fighting was uncomplicated: advance against or await the adversary and fight hand to hand once contact was made. Each occasion has distinctive features, but it is difficult to say anything substantial about the precise way in which specific troop categories, infantry or equestrian, contributed in the heat of battle. Herodotus' remark about spear-breaking and loose-order sallies at Plataea (9.62) offers an unusual degree of detail. Arrian's characterization of cavalry fighting at Granicus (1.15.4) and Gaugamela (3.15.1–3.15.2) as abnormal is interesting – but one wonders whether Issus was that dissimilar (Arr., *An.* 2.11.2–2.11.3). The deliberate retention of cavalry for a deadlock-breaking intervention at Malene (Hdt. 6.29) is an exceptional piece of tactical planning. Assyrian parallels suggest that the shield wall should be conjoined with flanking cavalry movements (Fagan 2010: p. 96), but Herodotus does not indicate that at all clearly, and it cannot have applied at Mycale, where there was no cavalry. The accounts of Plataea, Gaugamela, or Cunaxa do convey that a large battle is the sum of distinct engagements dictated by planning, reaction, and chance. Granicus is much simpler, Issus somewhere in between. In all we get single-combat vignettes and imaginative general evocations. But here and elsewhere the strategic and tactical calculations, and their relationship to troop categories, seem banal – when observable at all: the overwhelming majority of Persian military actions reach us in narratives that provide no material for analysis. Herodotus imagines Mardonius criticizing the way Greeks fought battles (7.9), but he may be meant to be talking nonsense, and we can infer no Herodotean insight into the (different) way in which Persians did so. The underlying contrast between those who fight to conquer and those who do it for conflict resolution is a different matter.

Fleet

Given the length of their coastline, Herodotus' view that Persians were not sea-farers (1.143) cannot have been entirely accurate. But, in the absence of evidence about operations in the Gulf, it is true that the only specifically Iranian contribution to naval warfare comes from the Persian, Median, and

Sacan infantrymen carried on each ship (Hdt. 7.96). The ships themselves and those who operated them came from Anatolia, Cyprus, the Levant, and Egypt, and the only issue is whether the ships were the property of the king or the nations from whose harbors they sailed. The only text that addresses this question, Diod. 11.3.7, affirms the former solution: the king provided hulls, the subjects crews (for defense of this view, with arguments of varying weight, cf. Wallinga 1987). Otherwise, though the king may order shipbuilding (Hdt. 6.49, 95; Xen., *Hell.* 3.4.1; Diod. 11.2.3; 11.62.1; 11.71.6; 11.75.2; 14.98.3–14.98.4; 17.7.2), our narratives label fleets or their components Greek, Phoenician, Cilician, Egyptian, or Cypriot (when they apply labels at all), and the Persians' acquisition of naval military capacity – by Cambyses (Hdt. 3.13; 4.19, 44) – was certainly predicated on existing eastern Mediterranean resources and skills. Of course, Persian money and ambition enabled a greater realization of those resources and skills. Over the following two centuries fleets contributed in varying degrees to military operations in Egypt, Cyrenaica, Transdanubian Scythia, Cyprus, the Levant, coastal Anatolia, and mainland Greece. Herodotus imagined a war fleet of 1207 ships in 480 BCE. Numbers for other substantial fleets vary from 600 (Hdt. 4.87; 6.6, 9, 95; Phanodemus ap. Plut., *Cim.* 12) to 200 (Hdt. 5.30), with 300 a favorite figure (Ctes. 14[37]; Xen., *Hell.* 3.4.1; Diod. 11.75.2; 15.2.1; 15.41.3; 16.22.2; 16.40.6; 17.29.2), and stray examples of 350 (Ephorus ap. Plut., *Cim.* 12) and 400 (Arr., *An.* 1.18.5, 7). After the collapse of the Athenian Empire and (especially) the King's Peace, Persia had the naval advantage but failed to exploit it against Alexander, despite the latter's disbandment of his fleet. A special cachet attached to Phoenician ships (Hdt. 3.19, 136; 6.6, 14; 7.44, 100; 9.96; Arr., *An.* 2.17.3), though Cilicia could be an operating base (Hdt. 5.108; 6.43, 95; Diod. 11.75.2; 11.77.1; 14.39.4; 15.2.2; Wallinga 1987), and something similar is said of Cyme/Phocaea (Diod. 11.2.3; 11.27.1; 15.2.2). Persian warships were always triremes, but some believe that Phoenicians built them differently from Greeks (notably in not having an out-rigger), so that a mixed Persian fleet would combine distinct models, and some "Persian" ships would differ from, for example, Athenian ones. A few written texts suggest – if not consistently (and never in reference to out-riggers) – a distinction in appearance/performance between all "Persian" ships and Greek/Athenian ones (Hdt. 8.10, 60a; Plut., *Them.* 14; Diod. 11.61.1–11.61.2; Polyae. 1.34; Front. 2.9.10) and, complicatingly, there is an issue about post-479 BCE changes in Athenian trireme design (Thuc. 1.14, 49; Plut., *Cim.* 12), which intersects with Plut., *Them.* 14. Debate is hampered by lack of clear contemporary images and uncertainty about the technical exactitude of such images as there are – warships from the Persian sphere appear on sealings from Persepolis (PTS 32) and Susa (Amiet 1973: pl. 16.73) and coins from

Sidon, Byblos, and Aradus, but those who think Phoenician ships had a different oarage system are in the minority. It is unlikely that all triremes from the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean were always identical, and differences might have extended beyond decorative matters (e.g. the presence of *pataeci* or shield rows on Phoenician ships) to the lateral extent of decking or height above water level. But outside Salamis (a special case topographically and historiographically), the admittedly uncircumstantial narratives do not suggest that such variations made a significant difference to tactics or outcomes when “Persian” fleets clashed with “Greek” adversaries.

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CHAPTER 82

Mercenaries

Christopher Tuplin

Introduction

A mercenary fights to promote state interests, is paid to do so, and is not also prompted by other ethnic or community affiliations. There is a general overlap between “mercenary” and “foreign” – hence early texts call mercenaries *xenoi*. Dissociation from community affiliation may not be total. People can shift from politically-determined to mercenary employment. Some Persian mercenaries in 334–330 BCE may also have been anti-Macedonian. The Athenian Chares called his mercenaries’ victory over Tithraustes a Second Marathon (sch. Dem. 4.19, FGrH 105(1), Diod. 16.22, 34). Mercenary groups can become institutionalized: the Semitic troops in Elephantine were outside the market while Persian authority held. But, though fuzzy at the edges, the conception of the mercenary as a paid outsider basically works.

Persian-employed mercenaries may appear in non-textual evidence: they have been detected on the Alexander Mosaic, the Alexander sarcophagus, the Karaburun tomb-paintings, the Çan sarcophagus, and elsewhere, and Persian-associated Anatolian or Levantine coin issues may reflect the hiring of soldiers. But the heart of the evidence is textual, and the present sketch is based on a dataset of some 125 items.

The core (about 50%) is supplied by texts that use key terms (*misthophoroi*, *epikouroi*, *mercenarii*) or disclose troops receiving pay and apparently serving for no other reason.

Assigning texts to the core is not always straightforward. There are no unambiguous non-Greco-Latin terms for “mercenary soldier.” Semitic troops at Syene-Elephantine count as mercenaries because they receive pay/rations but not colony-style land allocations. Babylonia discloses individuals hired privately to fulfill another’s military-service obligation, but we do not know that the state spent tax income (from bow fiefs or elsewhere) on hiring mercenaries en masse, and the case of Carians (from Egypt) and Jews living off hypothecated tax income in Borsippa (Waerzeggers 2006; VS 6.128) is of debatable relevance. Classical texts containing key words do not always reveal mercenaries (Xen.*Hell.*1.3.17, Thuc.8.50, *Hell. Oxy.*20[15]) and not all soldiers present in contexts that do contain mercenaries necessarily count (Xen. *An.* 7.6.15, Curt. 4.5.18, Arr. 2.13.4–5). Other uncertainties include whether Heraclides 689F2 means to categorize soldiers paid in food as mercenaries, or the claim that the mysterious *Kardakes* (Tuplin 2014: pp. 686–688) were “barbarians serving for pay” (Eustath. *ad Iliad.* 2.289) is reliable, or Xenophon actually thought countryside *phrouroi* (*Oec.*4.6, *Cyr.*8.6.3) were mercenaries like those in citadels (Tuplin 1987: pp. 173–174).

The rest of the dataset deals with soldiers who – because of their ethnic identity, their commander’s other associations with known mercenaries, or other indications – seem analogous to those in core texts. Some cases are more uncertain than others: examples of uncertainty might include Athenodorus (Ael.*VH* 1.25, Plut.*Phoc.*18), Clearchus (Justin 16.4.1–10, Suda s.v. *Klearkhos*), Menelaus (Tod 1948: no.148), the Argive, Boeotian, and “King’s Greeks” in Egypt in 343 (Diod.16.44), Pharnabazus’ Mysians (Xen.*Hell.*4.1.20), and Autophradates’ Pisidians and Aspendians (Nep.*Dat.*8). Some at least of four commanders in non-Greco-Latin texts were probably mercenaries (Naqman: TADAE D22.7; ‘Armapiya: A6.8; Trkmnh: D22.25,27; Payava: TL 40b) and the Tel el-Maskutah Arabs are generally so classified (TADAE D15.1–5). I am less sure about the Egyptians Xenophon (thought he) encountered in Babylonia in 401 BCE (*An.* 1.8.9). Cilician and Syrian booty-seeking “volunteers” in Diodorus 16.42 lie between ordinary soldiers and ordinary mercenaries. The Hyrcanian, Median, and Bactrian horsemen at Granicus (Diod.17.19) recall the Hyrcanian royal mercenaries Xenophon met 65 years earlier (*An.* 7.8.15). If Mausolus were a better attested mercenary employer, we would readily see soldiers affected by his “gate-drachma” tax (Ps.-Arist. *Oec.* 1348a25) as mercenaries. As it is, the question is open.

Important though it is to insist that in Achaemenid contexts “mercenary” is not coterminous with “Greek mercenary,” we must acknowledge that in the available evidence, “mercenary” is very much a Greek category, and that particular examples amenable to analysis are likely to be Greek.

Geographical Location

Evidence for Persian mercenary use predominantly relates to East Aegean Islands, Anatolia, the Levant, and Egypt. Apart from the Ten Thousand, there are no certain Greek mercenaries beyond the Euphrates until after Issus. Non-Greek mercenaries do appear in Babylonia but not demonstrably in Persepolitan or Bactrian archives, and Heraclides' ration-receiving royal soldiers (689F2) are presumably Persian. The isolation of the Indian Oxydracae (Megasth.715F20) – employed in the east? – may reflect an unpropitious source base, but the Alexander historians' representation of the heartlands and eastern portion of the empire notably avoids the label "mercenary."

Date Range and Early Patterns of Use

In the light of evidence from Syene-Elephantine and Babylonia, the time frame of some sort of mercenary use is nearly co-extensive with the empire's history. (Both contexts involve continuity from pre-Persian conditions.) But the earliest unequivocal Greek mercenaries are those of Pissuthnes at Notium in 428 BCE (Thuc.3.34), and the earliest probable ones were acquired by Megabyzus c. 450 BCE (Ctesias 688F14[40]). The Saïtes' Greek and Carian mercenaries disappear after 526 BCE, and there is no call to classify the Ionians/Aeolians of Herodotus 1.171 as mercenaries or to discover the category in 3.139–140 or 8.26. Megabyzus' perhaps modest Greek mercenary force was an accidental by-product of the Egyptian rebellion, his son's (688F15[52]) a continuation of family tradition. Meanwhile, the practice had appeared in western Anatolia by 428 BCE, by imitation or independently. Use of barbarian mercenaries there is as early as of Greek ones: it is explicitly attested in 428 BCE and 412 BCE (Thuc.3.34, 8.25), and the mercenaries in Samos in 440 BCE (1.115, Plut.*Per.*25) could have been wholly or partly non-Greek. At the end of the century Cyrus represents a new stage, at least in scale. Whether it was a new stage in proportions of Greek and non-Greek is another matter. The known non-Greek element among the Ten Thousand is small, but Xenophon might be misleading, and it is conceivable there were entirely separate non-Greek mercenaries elsewhere in Cyrus' army. In any event, explicit co-use of Greek and non-Greek mercenaries is rare in later evidence. For the pattern of mercenary use after Cyrus see below.

Ethnicity

The majority of mercenary sources refer clearly or very plausibly to Greeks or a Greek commander – not that a Greek commander guarantees a wholly Greek force (Thuc.3.34, Xen. *An.* 1.2.9, *Hell. Oxy.*20[15], Curt. 4.5.22, Polyæn.

6.10) – but many indicate no ethnicity at all. Doubtless the soldiers involved were often largely or entirely Greek, but our database is not quite as explicitly dominated by Greek mercenaries as sometimes assumed. Core items give us mercenaries labeled as Arab, Aramaean, Assyrian, Bactrian, Caspian, Chaldaean, Chalybian, Chorasmian, Egyptian, Hyrcanian, Jewish, Macronian, Mysian, Oxydracan, Taochian, or Thracian, as well as others of indeterminate non-Greek origin. The more speculative half of the database might add Aspendians, Babylonians, Carians, Lycians, Pamphylians, Pisidians, and Scythians. (Given the early association of Carians and mercenary service, the elusiveness of explicit Carian mercenaries in Persian service is remarkable.)

Achaemenid mercenaries were not necessarily complete outsiders. But there is an element of marginality: Oxydracans, Chorasmians, Bactrians, Hyrcanians, Caspians, and Scythians from the eastern or northeastern edges, Arabs, and Thracians from the southwestern and northwestern edges respectively. Chalybians, Taochians, and Chaldaeans are groups just outside the frontier whose employment assists local stability (cf. Xen. Cyr. 3.2.25–31). Any Pisidian and Mysian mercenaries are part of a story of internal independence that was sometimes confrontational. (Onomastically non-Iranian “Caspians” in Elephantine evoke Cadusians, another problematic group.) *Mutatis mutandis* Caria and Lycia may fit the pattern. The North-West Semites of Syene-Elephantine originated within the empire, but as a Saite inheritance, they constitute a special case. So (for similar reasons) do Babylonians in Babylonia. From the 540s BCE onward the empire always had Greek subjects, but the numbers were largest before 478 BCE and after 386 BCE, and the latter period coincides with substantial use of Greek mercenaries. But it is hard to prove many were of eastern Greek origin, and I suspect that Persians thought of Greek mercenaries as characteristically from an area outside the empire that they had tried and failed to conquer.

Some mercenary environments were ethno-culturally mixed: that is true of Syene-Elephantine and, with varying security, in some other cases (Thuc. 3.34, 8.28, Xen. An. 1.2.19, 4.4.18, 7.8.15, Arr.1.29.1, 2.13.4–5, Curt. 4.5.18). But most sources suggest that mercenaries present on a particular occasion were of a single ethnicity (normally Greek, if specified) or entirely ignore the question. Some of the latter cases may conceal ethnic mixture, whether within command units (as at Elephantine and in Clearchus’ force) or between them.

Numbers

Some sources provide numbers, but most (more than 80%) do not. Where figures are available, the major aggregations represent a gradual upward trend: 12 000 mercenaries in Cyrus’ expedition in 401 BCE (Xen. An. 1.2.9),

12 000 or 20 000 in Egypt in 373 BCE (Nep. *Iph.* 2, Diod. 15.41), 10 000 or 20 000 associated with rebel satraps in the 360s BCE (Diod. 15.91, Polyæn. 7.14.3), 20 000 at Granicus (Arr. 1.14.4), 30 000 at Issus (2.8.6). Fitting other figures into this pattern is hard because they appear unsystematically, we cannot assess continuities between successive mercenary forces or the total number of Persian-employed mercenaries at a given moment, and the dataset embraces mercenaries used for and against the king. But it is possible that the upward trend was punctuated by attempts to cut back after the 373 BCE Egyptian fiasco and in the early 350s BCE; and our picture of the start of the trend can be nuanced: since Cyrus' pre-401 BCE mercenary complement was probably no more than 5000, a similar number of "hoplites" appears with Struthas in 392 BCE (Diod. 14.99), and we have no figures for Persian mercenaries in the Evagoras war, we may wish to stress Artaxerxes II's concern to maximize Greek recruitment for the Egyptian War of 373 BCE (Diod. 15.38). This was the first point at which the king sought to change the scale of mercenary use. (He had rejected an earlier chance by not employing Cyrus' Greeks after Cunaxa.)

Mercenary Employment Relations

We cannot always precisely identify a mercenary group's employer. Sometimes nothing salient is recorded. Sometimes the question is meaningless because, as at Syene-Elephantine, the documentation is ill-designed to address it. Sometimes mercenaries have a named commander but no defined superior/employer. When employer identity is a meaningful question, the answer is normally a person of satrapal or similar status – usually Iranian, occasionally Greek (Diod. 16.50, 17.29) or Carian (16.42, 46). Xenophon's account of garrisons (Xen. *Cyr.* 8.6.1–3, 9, 16, 8.20, *Oec.* 4.5–11) and Artaxerxes III's disbandment of Anatolian mercenaries (schol. Dem. 4.19) also picture satraps as the proximate source of remuneration. Babylonian mercenaries on private one-to-one contracts represent a very different model, but mercenary employment is normally a high-level activity. Whenever mercenaries are not used by a rebel, one could regard the king as ultimate employer. But he is rarely named unless playing an unusually direct role, as in Arrian's statement that the mercenary commander Hegesistratus defended Miletus in 334 BCE as a royal appointee (1.18.4).

Sometimes there is no further detail about the employer–mercenary interface. In other cases sources show both a Persian employer and other relevant individuals, either military commanders (quite often) or third-party beneficiaries (Thuc. 1.115, 3.34), or the employer's hierarchical subordinates (e.g. Xen. *Hell.* 3.1.13, 7.1.27, Dem. 23.142, 154, Diod. 16.50). Such

subordinates may initially look like the primary employer but are probably at most the actual hirer.

The recruitment process is usually unaddressed. The biggest exception is Cyrus' expeditionary army, assembled by various means from existing and new resources (Xen. *An.* 1.1.6–7, 9–11; Roy 1967: pp. 296–309). The result was the largest aggregation yet in the Aegean/Anatolian world and perhaps anywhere. (Isocrates 5.96 claims assembling such an army was hard in 401 BCE: in the 340s BCE there were many potential soldiers and a well-developed market, whereas in 401 BCE specialist hiring agents were needed and had to be rewarded with bounties. Isocrates is not an objective witness, but there is probably truth in what he says.) Elsewhere we hear of recruitment for specific purposes (Xen. *Hell.* 4.8.7, Diod. 15.38,91, 16.50, 17.29, schol. Dem. 4.19, Arr. 2.25), encounter unusual cases – Megabyzus' Greek mercenaries; Syrian and Cilician “volunteers” (Diod. 16.42); sailors turned mercenary (Xen. *Hell.* 1.1.25–26) – and Mania's performance-related rewards (*Hellenica* 3.1.13) probably affected recruitment. Some mercenaries were acquired as groups (Xen. *An.* 1.1.9–11, 4.3, Diod. 15.91, 16.45, sch. Dem. 4.19, Polyae. 3.9.56), though not normally directly from defeated enemy armies (cf. Diod. 16.49): Persia's allies and opponents were more open to that practice (Thuc. 8.28, Xen. *Hell.* 3.1.23, Arr. 1.19.5, 3.24.2; Curt. 4.5.18). One curious detail is that men could prove how long they had served with the Persians (Arr. 3.24.2). Perhaps they carried a (payment-related?) record-of-service document.

Few texts are more than banal in dealing with pay. At Elephantine, silver and rations came from the “royal house” (TADAE B3.13, B4.3/4, B5.5). The silver is unquantified. In Babylonia, military silver payments might range from 2 to 10 shekels per month (Jursa 2007: p. 259). Only 10 shekels matches the order of magnitude of the basic (non-officer) one daric monthly pay rate in Greek sources. But the comparison is complicated, as mercenary employers in the west did not usually supply free rations (or equipment). Greek texts report interesting anecdotes – Cyrus produces overdue pay thanks to cash from the Cilician queen and raises salary levels after a mutiny (*An.* 1.2.12, 3.21), Datames satisfies mercenaries with silver from Cappadocian temples (Polyae. 7.21.1, Ps.-Arist. *Oec.* 1350b16), Autophradates justifies a full army parade as a numbering exercise prior to payment (Polyae. 7.27.3), the Mausolan “gate-drachma” might thwart fraudulent pay claims (Ps.-Ar. *Oec.* 1348a25), Iphicrates' men expect payment from Persian-speaking functionaries (Polyae. 3.9.59) – but these make only a tangential contribution to our understanding of the mechanisms involved.

Basic pay was supplemented by performance-related rewards (Theop. 115F124, Xen. *An.* 1.4.15, 7.4–8, 9.7–29, *Hell.* 3.1.13, Diod. 15.9,91) and booty (Xen. *An.* 1.2.19,26, 2.4.27, Diod. 16.22,42, Diod. 17.7, Polyae.

5.44.5, FGrH 105[4]), although the dataset is rarely interested in the latter: *Anabasis* reveals men intent on amassing wealth, and we may read that mentality into all mercenaries, and even allow that Isocratean visions of mercenary violence encoded a truth about their appetitive urges. But the record does not damn Persian-employed mercenaries particularly severely in this respect.

Types, Combinations, and Contexts of Use

Although mercenary cavalry appear occasionally (Xen. *An.* 1.5.7, 2.2.7, 7.8.15, *Oec.* 4.5, *Cyr.* 8.8.20, Diod. 17.19, TL 40b, Kuhrt 2007: 722[38]), Persian-employed mercenaries are mostly infantry. But the dataset is largely unconcerned with further specification: exceptions include Xenophon's garrison soldiers (archers, slingers, *gerrhophoroi*: *Oec.* 4.5), Chaldaeans (lances, large *gerrha*: *Cyr.* 3.2.7, 25–7), Chalybians (linen breastplates, greaves, helmets, knives: *An.* 4.4.18, 7.15), and Assyrian “hoplites” (7.8.15). Few relevant texts outside *Anabasis* refer specifically to Greek hoplites or to any sort of peltasts (perhaps peltasts were not what Persians needed), though light-armed soldiers are occasionally present (Xen. *Hell.* 3.1.18, Polyæn. 5.16.2) – rare cases where a mercenary infantry force explicitly contains more than one type of soldier. More frequently a (homogeneous) mercenary force operates with non-mercenary troops, characteristically cavalry. But even when substantive military narrative exists, such cases rarely provide clear indications of genuine combined tactical use. This is variously true at, for example, Miletus (Thuc. 8.25), Cyzicus (Diod. 13.50–51), Cunaxa (Xen. *An.* 1.8.11–29), Centrites (4.3.3), Caicus (7.8.15), Egyptian delta (Diod. 15.42), Granicus (17.19–20, Arr. 1.13–16, Plut. *Alex.* 16), Halicarnassus (Diod. 17.23–27, Arr. 1.20–23), and Issus (2.8–11, Curt. 3.8.1–11.27, Diod. 17.33–34): mercenaries and others are present on the same occasion but there is nothing special about the way they work together.

The protection of countryside evoked in *Oeconomicus* and *Cyropaedia* (Xen. *Cyr.* 8.6.1–3, 16, *Oec.* 4.5–11) is exemplified in the Caicus Valley but rarely elsewhere: Orontes and Tiribazus in Armenia (4.3.3–4, 4.7, 18) are not comparable, and, although military commanders often defend territory, cases known to us generally involve higher-level political considerations than those in *Anabasis* 7.8.12–19. Most mercenary episodes involve (i) defence of or attack upon cities, towns, or forts, or (ii) relatively substantial encounters in open country between properly formed armies, and although these broad categories cover a range of possibilities, mercenaries do not appear in contexts that diverge much from the generality of ancient military activity. It would be hard to maintain, for example, a special link with operations making unusually heavy demands on high professional skills. There are several stories about

mercenary or part-mercenary forces mounting surprise attacks, but there is no broad association between mercenaries and the use of stratagem or trickery, even if men such as Memnon and Mentor liked to achieve their goals without too much fighting (Dem. 23.154, Diod. 16.52,17.7, Polyae. 5.44.3,5). Natural *déracinés*, mercenaries were suitable for long-distance undertakings, but in such contexts they are normally alongside others who were probably being taken away from stronger local links. The Cypriot campaign of the 340s BCE (Diod. 16.42,46) is the only case in which an army originating some distance from the theater of events is entirely mercenary. The contemporaneous preparations for Levantine and Egyptian campaigns may explain this special case.

Strengths and Weaknesses

Disadvantages are plain. Mercenaries can be troublesome about payment (*Hell. Oxy.* 23, Polyae. 3.9.59, 7.21.1,27.3, Ps.-Arist. *Oec.* 1350b16) or food supplies (Diod. 15.3) or otherwise (Xen. *An.* 1.3.1–20, 4.12, Diod. 15.9, TADAE A6.8). Stories or threats of disloyalty (Ctes. 688F15[52–53], Xen. *An.* 1.4.3,7,9, *Cyr.* 8.2.19, Diod. 15.43, 17.23, Curt. 4.5.16,22, Polyae. 3.9.56, 6.10, 7.3.22, Dem. 14.31, 23.154, Just. 16.4.1–10) outnumber the reverse (Ctes. 688F15[52], Diod. 15.91, Arr. 1.19.6, Curt. 3.1.8, 5.8.3). Relations between employers-commanders and troops could veer between good and bad – or even fatal (Diod. 17.30). Still, mercenaries were a potentially valuable military resource, although we cannot objectively demonstrate that (increasing) mercenary use was in general a systematic response to actual or perceived shortfalls in other recruitment. (Rebels, of course, had obvious cause to fill the ranks with soldiers whom pay made careless of issues of loyalty to the king.) At the same time, merely having more soldiers is not enough: there is no point in spending money on poor ones. A decision to hire mercenaries presupposes competence, even excellence.

Sources rarely offer unequivocal qualitative assessments – the “valiant” and warlike Chaldaeans (Xen. *An.* 4.3.3, *Cyr.* 3.2.7) were also undisciplined (*Cyr.* 7.2.5–8) – and occasional references to *epilektoi* or *aristoi* (Polyae. 7.14.2, Diod. 15.70, 17.26,27) add little. Texts about the Persians’ dependence on Greek mercenaries (pp. 10–11) are less concerned to praise the latter’s skill than criticize the former’s moral failings, but they do entail a Persian judgment that such mercenaries were a high-quality resource. To reject that inference entirely would be to take anti-Persian rhetoric too seriously; putative moral decline had hardly left Persia with no viable military resources of its own.

Outcomes of actual mercenary use are not substantially more positive than negative. Failure can be due to surprise or deception, disaffection, inferiority

in firepower or numbers, inadequate tactical support, carelessness, or to no specifically obvious cause. Occasionally there are hints of inferior mercenary quality (Thuc. 8.25, Diod. 17.27, Xen. *An.* 4.3.21, *Hell.* 3.2.18). But Orontes' disguise of non-Greeks as Greeks (Polyaen. 7.14.4) faked the arrival of reinforcements rather than exploiting expectations of Greek superiority. Reasons for success include numerical advantage, enemy disaffection, or confusion, successful stratagems, psychologically astute leadership, unexpected attack, tactical opportunism, and visibly superior discipline. Some outcomes may reflect higher quality (Xen. *Hell.* 3.1.3, *An.* 1.8.19, Diod. 15.42, 16.48 Polyaen. 3.9.63, 7.14.3, 27.1). But it is characteristic that the most remarkable victory enabled by Persian-employed mercenaries (Chares' "Second Marathon": schol. Dem. 4.19) is unexplained. Where mercenary ethnicity is (reasonably) clear, Greeks do get the better of barbarians slightly more often than vice versa. But some would see that as the bias of a Greek dataset.

Persian employers operated in a constrained market. They hired the mercenaries available where they were: Greeks were not systematically exported east nor non-Iranian mercenaries west. So where Greeks are concerned what matters is the quality of western alternatives. The rare appearance of Carians, Mysians, Lycians, Pisidians, Aspendians, or Pamphylians, the unidentifiability of Tissuthnes' (Thuc. 3.34) or Tissaphernes' (8. 25) "barbarian" mercenaries, and the sources' tendency to speak simply of "mercenaries" impede objective assessment of this question. Still, the issue is not entirely ethnic. Preference for Greek mercenaries is preference for a certain type of soldier. Most were hoplites and although later classical hoplites were lighter and more tactically flexible than their Persian Wars counterparts, Herodotus' articulation of hoplite advantages (9. 62) remained relevant in combat against lighter armed infantry – and they were unlikely to encounter infantry with heavier body armor. They also had as good a chance as anyone of dealing with the challenges presented by cavalry. So the decision to use Greek hoplites was rational in any predictable tactical situations.

But if Greeks were potentially useful employees, why are they so elusive before the mid-fifth century BCE?

When Persians reached Anatolia they encountered no local mercenary establishment. (No such thing is predicated of the Lydian kingdom.) Greeks and Carians were in mercenary employment – but in Egypt. When Persians reached Egypt, they inherited Semitic soldiers at Syene-Elephantine (and elsewhere?) but – perhaps because of strong identification with the Saite regime (Agut-Labordère 2012) – dispensed with Greeks and Carians: the communities survived (though some individuals ended up in Babylonia: above) but without military allure. The Saite military colonies (Hdt. 2.154) were in any case no precedent for hiring cash-economy Greek soldiers elsewhere; and the Greeks of Anatolia were subjects, those further west potential

targets of conquest. In this perspective Megabyzus' somewhat accidental acquisition of Greek mercenaries seems appropriate. But there were salient positive trends too. The post-478 BCE political environment (an imperial interface in Anatolia) probably provided earlier contexts for mercenary use than Samos or Notium (Thuc. 1.115, 3.34); it was now clear (unlike before Marathon) that Greek soldiers deserved respect, and a market in such soldiers existed (as Sicilian tyrants knew).

But if the Persians turned to mercenaries somewhat late and initially modestly, they could eventually be seen as embarrassingly and self-destructively dependent upon them. The relevant testimonies here are remarks by Plato, Xenophon, and Isocrates.

Persian Dependence on Greek Mercenaries

Plato (*Laws* 697E: c.350) says the Persians must rely on foreign mercenaries as their own subjects are completely alienated. Xenophon (*Cyropaedia* 8.8.20–26: late 360s BCE) sees dependence on Greeks as the consequence of a military collapse which provokes more extensive mercenary use and reflects moral decline and the failure of the “rich” to play their role in the military establishment. These observations evoke three Isocratean texts. *On Peace* 47 (355 BCE) presumes extensive Persian use of mercenaries but is primarily criticizing Athenians. *Panegyricus* 135 (c. 380 BCE) says Tiribazus' most useful forces in the Evagoras war were Greek, but does not affirm that Persians habitually act on the assumption of being ineffective without such contingents. But this does appear in *Philippus* 125 (346 BCE): in all their wars the Persians get generals and soldiers from Greece because they have no useful ones of their own. (This time no reasons are given.)

Surviving assertions of Persian dependence do not, therefore, predate the late 360s BCE. There were potential earlier contexts for such statements (Diod.15.38, Xen. *Hell.* 7.1.38), but it remains possible that Isocrates *Panegyricus* is a *terminus post quem* for widespread interest in the topic; and we should not over-hastily assume that *Cyropaedia* rehearses a long-established cliché. (Moreover, Plato's comments reflect the intertextual relationship between *Cyropaedia* and *Laws* and may prove nothing about general contemporary discourse.)

More than a decade after Isocrates' *Philippus*, Darius allegedly relied primarily on his Greek mercenaries (Curt. 3.3.1). The assertion comes from a tradition reasonably suspected of lack of objectivity. Still, if the contrast in the tactical use of mercenaries between Issus (centrally important) and Granicus (completely sidelined) has any reality, Darius' strategy for fighting Alexander differed from that of his Anatolian satraps; and Memnon's appointment after Granicus as overall commander in the west is not only consistent with Darius'

tactics at Issus but makes it not simply absurd to say that Memnon's premature death was a major blow.

The observations of Xenophon, Plato, and Isocrates are not a reasoned assessment of whatever data might have been available and relevant. The Alexander historians may come closer but only made a judgment about 334–333 BCE. Can we better them in scope and better Xenophon and the others in reason and balance? Given our unsystematic and often unnuanced dataset, it is hard to deal with such a question with much confidence.

The Overall Incidence of Mercenary Use

To get a handle on real mercenary use we must see it against the background of all known Persian military activity. One approach is to assess its incidence in texts that refer to Persian forces in a specific historical context (stories of actual use, not institutional generalizations or documentary inferences) and relate to a period from the mid-fifth century to late 331 BCE (the limits of narrative attestation of mercenary activity). The answer turns out to be that mercenaries appear around 45% of the time.

The relevant dataset certainly understates the number of military forces and/or occasions already known to us where mercenaries were present. Persian grandees known as employers/commanders of mercenary forces probably used them on at least some occasions when surviving sources ignore the fact. With even a few more details about the same dataset, we could reasonably expect the figure to rise to 50–55%. However, we can also be certain that (even in areas of interest to Greco-Roman authors) there were many more forces and/or events of which we might have heard but do not: but predicting their mercenary characteristics is barely possible. One becomes conscious here of the difficulty of dealing with Xenophon's remarks about protection of the imperial landscape. Such generalizations are theoretically a basis for predicting what non-extant sources might have said about specific military contexts – but one needs unequivocal faith in and understanding of the generalization for it to be of use. In the end, if we are to play this sort of statistical game, it has to be with the dataset that we have got.

Forty-five percent is quite a high figure. To maintain that it is seriously misleading we must insist either that it applies to only part of the empire or that, in the part to which it does apply, the sources systematically over-report mercenary forces or under-report non-mercenary ones. The former approach is a pointless evasion: whatever the case elsewhere, it is valid to ask about levels of use in Anatolia and the eastern Mediterranean. The latter approach asks a more serious question. Existing sources do not over-report actual mercenaries: they could have reported more without adding any new groups or episodes to the dataset. But is the sort of military story-telling they are interested in liable

to over-privilege certain types of forces and episodes? And (more pertinently), if so, are they selecting forces/episodes that are relatively peripheral to the real Achaemenid military agenda? I think it is difficult to say the answer to both of these questions is yes. What could this hidden “real” agenda possibly be?

Another possibility is that the 45% figure is misleading because when mercenaries played a role, their number relative to other units was normally small. But we lack the data to validate such a claim. On the one hand, the headline mercenary figures increase over the seven decades from Cyrus to Issus – and, if there were reductions in the interim, this may be actual evidence of a Persian judgment that too many mercenaries were being employed. On the other hand, systematic assessment of the relative numerical importance of mercenary and non-mercenary components on a case-by-case basis is impossible because figures are lacking or (when provided for non-mercenary elements) liable to irreparable exaggeration.

In the end one has to say that at least after c. 450 BCE, mercenaries were a standard feature of the Achaemenid military environment in the west. Using them became a norm, whether among loyalists or rebels. (That said, it is oddly difficult to find battles between Persian grandees in which both sides demonstrably used mercenaries.) There is a degree of dependence here, but to see it as reprehensible is perhaps unfair. The Persians had to find infantry soldiers somewhere. There were never enough native Persians for that empire-wide requirement, so supplementation from elsewhere was a necessity. We remain ill-informed about other models for achieving this (native levies; proper military colonies, Iranian or otherwise) and can only speculate about the problems that attended their use. If outsiders were available for hire and likely to be no worse (perhaps better) at fighting than the alternatives, their employment was sensible. We should not infer otherwise from the fact that neither they nor anyone else succeeded in protecting the empire against Alexander. Or, at least, we should concede that judged by the criterion of defeat by Macedonia, Persians deserved contempt for use of mercenaries no more than people in the cities of central and southern Greece who were also apt to be excoriated (by fellow Greeks) for their willingness to let hired men fight their battles for them. Most of those defeated at Chaeronea were citizens, and most of these defeated at Issus were not mercenaries. Honors (or dishonors) are more or less even.

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SECTION IX

RELIGION AND WORSHIP

CHAPTER 83

The Religion of the Achaemenid Rulers

Albert de Jong

According to Herodotus (*Histories* 3.31), the second Achaemenid king, Cambyses, had an ardent wish to marry his sister. Since such a marriage was not customary among the Persians, he asked the royal judges whether there were laws against it. The judges obliged him with a legal trick: they could find no law permitting a man to marry his sister, but they did find one that stated that the king of the Persians could do whatever he wished. Thus emboldened, the king married not one, but eventually two of his full sisters.

This episode is obviously part of the notorious narrative cycle on the life and deeds of Cambyses, which (especially in the case of Herodotus, our chief source) was designed to cast the king in the role of an irresponsible sacrilegious madman (a reputation that seems to have stuck). It has always been tempting, therefore, to explain the story of Cambyses' wedding preferences as part of this heated propaganda campaign, but some scholars have taken it more seriously and have sought to provide it with an appropriate historical context. Some have pointed at the example of the Egyptian pharaohs, who contracted marriages between full brothers and sisters, and saw Cambyses' wish in the light of a mimetic act in the context of claiming the Egyptian throne. Others have, more predictably, interpreted them on the background of the Zoroastrian tradition, according to which marriages within the close family are considered meritorious.

Although there is general agreement that the sources are too meager for any conclusion to be reached, these different strategies of interpretation are a good entry into the subject of this chapter: the religion of the Achaemenid

rulers. For this subject, too, source materials are meager and fractious and interpretations have varied widely, but within two easily recognizable patterns. Some scholars have assembled, from narrative and documentary sources, all evidence for the practice of religion in the Achaemenid Empire (especially in a court context), have resisted the urge to interpret them in the light of “fixed” (but largely assumed) religious patterns, and simply presented them as a faithful reflection of the religious life at court (Nagel and Jacobs 1989). Others have started from the opposite side of the spectrum, by invoking the notion of a Zoroastrian “tradition” to which the kings would have “belonged,” which they “followed,” and which can (or must) be used to analyze and explain the evidence. The former approach has the merit of avoiding anachronistic interpretations, but has forsaken even the attempt to distinguish fact from fiction, even in contexts (such as, for example, Xenophon’s *Cyropaedia*) that appear to belong more to the realm of literary imagination. The latter procedure has the merit of giving direction to the question at hand – by fitting the evidence in *longue durée* patterns of the development of Iranian religion – but is often normative and anachronistic in placing reliance on a version of Zoroastrianism that is known to have taken shape only in the Sasanian period.

One of the chief instruments applied by scholars to avoid the extremes in these two positions is that of restricting scholarly attention to what are perceived to be “primary” sources: the Achaemenid royal inscriptions, the documentary evidence in Aramaic, the Elamite administration from the reign of Darius I, and the evidence of archeology. Many of these sources have little to say about religion, let alone about the religion of the Achaemenid rulers, so that the problem of finding a norm by which to judge and interpret the evidence remains.

To solve that particular problem, recourse is often taken to the evidence that has survived in Avestan, since the Avestan texts are considered to pre-date the rise of the Achaemenids (Knäpper 2011). That latter argument is, however, not unproblematic, since there is very little evidence to show the presence of texts in Avestan at the court of the Achaemenids, and almost no information on the question what people did with Avestan texts, with the exception of their (obvious) use in ritual contexts. There are, however, two tiny clues that could support the notion that Avestan texts were, indeed, present and used/understood at the Achaemenid court. The first comes from the throne names of various Achaemenid kings (Darius, Xerxes, Artaxerxes, etc.), which are believed to make deliberate reference to passages or concepts from the Gathas (and which would, therefore, not only show the presence, but also the understanding of these Avestan texts; Schmitt 1982; Kellens 2002: pp. 422–434; and see Skjaervø 1999, 2012: pp. 12–15, for the broader notion of the presence of “Avestan” at the Achaemenid court). The second clue is the names of various deities and that of the first mythical ruler, mentioned either in the

inscriptions or on the Persepolis tablets: four of these names (Auramazdā, Išpandaramattiš, Irdanapirurtiš, and Iamakšeda) show a characteristic pattern of joining up as one name what in Avestan are more or less mobile collocations of “name” and “epithet” (or rather “noun” and “adjective”). This strongly suggests that by the time of their being recorded in Achaemenid Parsa, these had become set names that were no longer understood or considered to consist of two separate (and understandable) words (de Jong 2015: p. 88). In this way, the presence and even use of Avestan (the defining characteristic of Zoroastrianism) can be demonstrated for the Achaemenid rulers (Kellens 2012).

There are, however, serious limitations to what can thus be known. The presence of individual (currently known) Avestan texts must remain uncertain, and so should the use of (currently known) Avestan texts as a normative source that demands to be followed, consulted, or believed. Such a normative role for Avestan texts is demonstrable only for the period after the writing down of the Avesta (the sixth century CE). Whatever we can reconstruct of earlier uses of religious literature strongly suggests that priests transmitted a body of traditions in the vernacular, alongside the liturgical texts in Avestan, and that it was this literature of tradition that formed the basis of the development of the religion – and acted as a shield for the majesty, stability, and non-temporality of the liturgy.

Three Styles of Religion at the Achaemenid Court

The present chapter does not aim to give an overview of “religion” in the Achaemenid Empire, but seeks to explore and discuss the evidence for the religion of the Achaemenid rulers. This subject has often been claimed to be fruitless, or its goal impossible to achieve, for lack of evidence (and historical relevance; de Jong 2015). The case may not be as grim as that, however, but it is important to make some of the limitations of the subject explicit. We have no instruments with which to measure “piety” or “devotion” or any other index of religious intensity. The chief reason for this is not just a dearth of evidence, but especially the institution of Achaemenid kingship itself. There is a firm distinction in most ideologies of kingship between the king as person and the king as institution. It is the latter, institutional, face of the king we get to see in all the non-literary surviving evidence, which does not allow of expressions of any emotion. This is made clear, programmatically, in several of the inscriptions of Darius. Many people show fear in DB, but not the king – he acts upon the fear of his people, and removes the obstacles in their (and his) way. When he outlines for posterity the qualities he, as the ideal king, possesses, these include not only physical abilities and unswerving support of

justice and peace, but also mental self-restraint (DNb 11–15). The intimate interconnections made in all inscriptions between the king's activities and the support of Auramazda belong to a vocabulary of divine support and of royal success, not to one of piety. It is interesting to contrast this self-representation with the (equally idealized) sentimental Cyrus one encounters in Xenophon's *Cyropedia*, but even there, amidst Cyrus' weeping and laughter, religion rarely arouses the king's emotions.

In order to come to terms with the scantiness of the evidence, and to move beyond the fact that the evidence tends to show us the "king as institution" alone, it may be useful to distinguish three "styles" of religion for the Achaemenid rulers: the imperial, the familial, and the dynastic style. The focus of the imperial style is the empire itself, with its ideological underpinnings and the attempts to make religion sustain the (Iranian parts of) the Empire. The focus of the familial style is the privacy of the king as person and of his family. The dynastic style is somewhere in between the other two styles: its focus is the royal family, both as a "family" and as the central focus of the "empire."

It is important to stress that these different styles are heuristic devices only: they do not represent different "varieties" of religion that would be recognized by those whom it concerned themselves. They are, so to speak, different lenses that enable us to see the constraints put on the expression of religion or religiosity in the royal family. Their chief aim is to restore to the Achaemenids two unavoidable aspects of (any) religion: variance and agency. Variance can, of course, manifest itself historically, socially, and regionally (i.e. in historical developments, in different manifestations of religiosity among the various social layers, and in regional pluralisms), and the question should therefore be if there are patterned variations in the manifestation of religion that can be explained. Agency, the active involvement of the kings in the development of "their" religion, is one of the possible explanations, but it is never the only one. We shall see that especially the inclusion of (purportedly) "foreign" elements in the "Iranian" religion of the Achaemenids finds a more natural interpretation if we work with the lenses afforded by these different styles of religion.

The Imperial Style of Religion Among the Achaemenids

The imperial style of Achaemenid religion is the most strongly discursive expression of the three styles. It manifests itself chiefly in three unequally documented (or evidence-based) domains: the first of these is the (much-discussed) dossier of the royal inscriptions, art and archeology, and their use of religious or religiously-based language, material culture, and imagery.

The second domain in which this imperial style may be traced is in the role the king played in the maintenance and support of religious observances that did not belong to his family traditions, but which came with the reality of the empire: the assumption, that is, of ritual responsibilities that were essential for the practice of kingship in (some of) the conquered, or included, territories of the empire. The third domain is much more hypothetical than the other two: it is rooted in the *ex post facto* realization that the Achaemenid Empire actively transformed the Zoroastrian religion, presumably in a deliberate imperial programme of streamlining (some) expressions of the Iranian religion.

The Achaemenid Kings Speaking About Their Religion

None of the royal Achaemenid inscriptions is actually *about* religion, but religious language is a very prominent part of many of these royal declarations. In some respects, the prominence of religious language in these texts makes them stand apart from their chief models, the royal declarations of other Near Eastern kings, who tend to speak of gods, rituals, and other aspects of religion chiefly when religion is the actual subject of their inscriptions (e.g. in dedicating temples). This can be connected with the absence of an institutionalized temple-cult in at least the earlier periods of the Achaemenid Empire. This absence seems to have sponsored the notion of the royal court as an imposing place of religious activity: whereas in the neighboring traditions, the king had to go to a specific place to fulfill his religious duties, in the case of the Achaemenids the court seems to have developed into a chief locus of imperial religion (de Jong 2010).

The overriding theme of the religious elements in the royal inscriptions is that of the king as maintainer, defender, and strengthener of order. This is done, chiefly, by recounting the fact that the royal god Auramazda, had (in the beginning) performed the same acts, with the same goal, and by pushing the parallels between royal and divine activities almost to their logical boundaries. The frequent protestations that the king could achieve all he had done only through the support of Auramazda add and stress the requisite temporal or humble nature of the king's program, compared to that of Auramazda, but mainly achieve what the king no doubt wanted to underline: the notion that the forging of the empire, its maintenance, growth, and esthetic embellishment, are terrestrial reflections of the creative act of the main deity (Lincoln 2012). This program is visible most clearly in the inscriptions of Darius, which seem to have established a model for his successors, and even though in the inscriptions of Xerxes and later kings variations can be found, these generally do not rise to the level that they would actively contradict this basic pattern. Alongside the importance of these declarations for a proper understanding of Achaemenid kingship and its ideology, it is likely that the way royal activity

was modeled on the notion of repeating or continuing Auramazda's act of creation and support for order has itself been a major factor in the development of the interpretation of Auramazda's role in Zoroastrian theology: he basically became king of heaven, and thus acquired a role that is not traceable for him in earlier texts (but is attested abundantly in all later Zoroastrian literature). Thus, we end up with the paradox that the kings claim to mimic the activities of their god, but that in reality their god increasingly came to be seen in the image of the earthly kings.

The Achaemenid kings were the rulers of a vast territory and of numerous peoples with their own characteristic cultures and religions. Some of these – Elam, Babylonia, Egypt – were not only the bearers of much older civilizations, but also the chief models that gave the kings of the Persians the building blocks for the creation of an international dynastic style. It is not surprising, therefore, that in some of these contexts, the kings of the Persians continued the religious roles that came with their job as rulers of newly conquered lands. This development is strikingly parallel to their maintenance, up to a point, of other social institutions in these lands, especially administrative practices. Thus, Cyrus the Great, of whose religious beliefs we know next to nothing, is presented (in the Cyrus Cylinder) as the restorer of destroyed Babylonian sanctuaries and the king whom Marduk loved; in turn, Cyrus himself expresses the wish to worship Marduk every day. In the Hebrew Bible, of course, he is the anointed chosen by God to restore Israel, rebuild Jerusalem and the House of God in that city (Is. 45; Ez. 1), which he does – according to Cyrus' words in the Ezra narrative – because the God of Israel told him to do so. Likewise, in Egypt there are traces of Achaemenid kings absorbing religious titles of the Egyptian kings they had replaced by conquering the land. None of this is in the least surprising, but the collective evidence of Persian kings thus living up to local expectations may throw some light on the most extensive dossier on royal patronage of religion that has survived: the Elamite administration from the reign of Darius I (Henkelman 2008). This enormous amount of documentary evidence has been the source of much confusion and frustration, chiefly because scholars attempted to press the evidence into preconceived notions of religious and cultural purity of lineage. An Iranian king (or a Zoroastrian king) could not, it was assumed, spend his wealth on the worship of "foreign" (in this case, Elamite) gods, or in the maintenance of priests who served them. And yet the evidence for this support and this maintenance is incontrovertible: a not negligible portion of the revenue of the central areas of the Achaemenid Empire went to ritual acts in honor of a wide assortment of deities, many of them Elamite, following (it must be presumed) Elamite custom and performed by Elamite religious specialists. There is evidence, it is true, for "Iranian" religious specialists, too, and the case has been made that all the evidence together supports the idea of a local, "Persian,"

religious complex largely of Elamite origin, with an influx of Iranian divine names and practices (Henkelman 2008). The obvious discrepancy between this type of documentary evidence and the very strong focus on Auramazda (and Auramazda alone) in (most of) the Old Persian inscriptions strongly suggests the differentiation that can be traced in similar manifestations of the imperial style of Achaemenid religion.

This is all the more the case in light of the final element to be discussed for this imperial version of religion: the obvious efforts the kings made for the streamlining of the Iranian religion, which has had lasting effects on the development of Zoroastrianism. Through the creation of a calendar to unify Zoroastrian observance, and through the (eventual) genesis of royal fires, fire-temples, and an organized priesthood (the evidence for which emerges only after the Achaemenid period, but in striking harmony with the notion that it must be a legacy of the Achaemenids), the Achaemenids obviously attempted to create a more coherent version of their own religion that would sustain their hold on the Iranian parts of the empire. The evidence for most of these developments – which also include a restructuring of the story of creation and the end of time, retold in terms of a 9000-year pact between the two spirits, a novel interpretation of the judgment of the soul, and a reinterpretation of the festival celebrated for the new year – the Achaemenids can be shown to have had a lasting impact on the development of Zoroastrianism (de Jong 2016). The importance of this gains relief from the fact that their (slightly distant) successors, the Parthians, are not known to have followed this imperial style of religion at all; there is no evidence for their use of religion as an element of culture that would sustain the empire. But the evidence, meager as it is, for the practice of Zoroastrianism in the Parthian empire clearly shows that some of the institutions the Achaemenids set up as part of this imperial style of their religion survived them.

The Familial Style of Religion Among the Achaemenids

Throughout its very long history, the family and the rites associated with the family have traditionally been seen as the mainstay or backbone of Zoroastrianism. This is particularly true, of course, of the history of Zoroastrianism after the Arab conquests, as a minority religion that had to eke out an existence among an ocean of Muslims and Hindus. In view of the difficulties in the source materials outlined above, which imply that those aspects of royalty we get to see belong more to the “king as institution” than to “the king as person,” the evidence for family practice is virtually non-existent. The private lives of kings are known to us chiefly from romantic retellings

that have been preserved in Greek – alongside similarly idealized representations of, for example, Achaemenid practices of education. It is important, however, to keep family aspects of the religion on the horizon of any discussion of the history of Iranian religions. In this particular case, its importance may chiefly be the fact that it is this version of Zoroastrianism – a religion practiced at home, served by family priests – that appears to have been the central practice of the religion among the Arsacids (Boyce and De Jong forthcoming). All evidence we have for the Achaemenids, however, belongs to the third, closely related, style of religion: the dynastic one.

The Dynastic Style of Religion Among the Achaemenids

A dynasty is, of course, basically a family and the evidence we have for family traditions – especially in the area of funerary arrangements – immediately shows this fact, alongside the fact that a dynasty is never an ordinary family. Momentous events in family life – birth, marriage, parenthood, bereavement, and death – have a particular acuteness for a ruling family, since they always have the potential to become matters of state concern. Similarly, celebrating festivals – one of the chief expressions of family religion throughout the ancient world – would almost naturally expand into state occasions whose symbolism speaks at least partly to the inner workings and cohesion of the empire.

The Achaemenids (like the Romans) did not have a coronation, although the late and singular testimony of Plutarch (*Life of Artaxerxes* 3; contrast Binder 2010 with de Jong 2010: pp. 545–547) suggests they had a certain (secret!) rite of investiture with an important religious element. The royal weddings are only described (in Greek sources) as festive occasions that were socially imposing, but did not have any religious component, and there is simply no information on rituals associated with birth (which would, at any rate, largely belong to the intimacy of family life). This leaves the rituals associated with the death of the king – or members of his family – as the most promising subject for an inquiry into dynastic religion. It is here, moreover, that the narrative sources of the Greek authors are to some extent confirmed by surviving material culture, and by the documentary evidence from Persepolis.

Arranging the funeral of a relative and honoring the souls of deceased relatives are important family duties throughout Iranian history. The evidence we have for royal burials is partly archeological – the tomb of Cyrus at Pasargadae and the tombs of various other kings at Persepolis and Naqsh-e Rostam – and partly literary (Briant 2002: pp. 522–523). These funerals were

to be followed, however, by memorial services in honor of the deceased king and for these services we have literary evidence (de Jong 2010: pp. 533–534) and solid confirmation from the Elamite tablets (Henkelman 2003), both of which show that these duties, while rooted in family observance, were dynastic in nature. This is supported, moreover, by the fact that the ceremonies fell into desuetude with the downfall of the dynasty – with the resulting loss of all awareness of the Achaemenids in later Iranian historical tradition.

These funerary services are remarkably parallel to the institution of the regnal fire, the evidence for which is, however, regrettably slight. It is only the late Greek historian Diodorus Siculus (17.114.4) who mentions something resembling this institution, in the context of certain events that had taken place after Alexander's destruction of the Achaemenid empire (de Jong 2010: pp. 550–551). It has been suggested, very reasonably, that the custom of lighting a fire with the accession of the new king (known, at any rate, from the Parthian and Sasanian periods) was rooted in the family custom of lighting a householder's fire upon the founding of a new family (Boyce and Grenet 1991: p. 17). This fire, too, would be extinguished with the death of the father, just as Diodorus says that the sacred fires were extinguished upon the death of the king.

Similar fittingly elaborate forms of basic family observance can be seen in the descriptions of festivals and meals organized by the court, which can all be explained in terms of the "dynastic" style of religion, which marked the same occasions as family observance, but with a much larger audience and a greater symbolic weight. It is in this appropriately grand style of the practice of the religion that we can, moreover, locate most of the evidence for the integration of elements of an international dynastic style: the Achaemenid emulation of their Near Eastern predecessors.

Conclusion

The private lives of kings, including their private beliefs, fears, and rituals, are permanently hidden from sight. This is most often attributed to a lack of evidence, but it is unlikely that new evidence will ever turn up to mend this situation, since the dominant ideology of kingship entails the occlusion of the king as person. In some cases, the Achaemenid *period* can be shown to have been a period of transformation, but we can never succeed in isolating individual kings as motors of religious change. The same is true for the meaning religion may have had for any individual king. But quite apart from the intuition (and the evidence) that religion mattered to the Achaemenid kings, the combined evidence strikingly suggests that the Achaemenid kings mattered very much for the development of their religion.

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CHAPTER 84

The Achaemenids and the Avesta

Jean Kellens

Preliminary Considerations

The religion of ancient Iran has left two witnesses: the Avesta, and documents from the Achaemenid Empire in Persia. Comparing the two is methodologically difficult for two reasons, as we know. First, the Avesta is a document that is out of phase with its time, in so far as its texts have been passed down to us by means of manuscripts, the oldest of which dates back to 1323 AD. We therefore have to project it back into the past, not only to determine its origins but also to relate it to the Achaemenid documents. Did its texts exist in 522 BCE and, if so, then where, since when, in what form, in what relation to one another, and for what purpose? Second, the Achaemenid documents are difficult to interpret, for reasons particular to each of their sections. For instance, the religious content of the royal inscriptions is so concise that it can provoke endless – and sometimes pointless – debate. The Fortification Archive, on which Wouter Henkelman (2008) has now done all the groundwork, is situated in the narrow perspective of “worship ... sponsored by the state” (Garrison, cited by Henkelman 2008: p. 101) – a notion which in itself is problematical.

Are the Avesta and the Achaemenid documents foreign to each other? To say that the Achaemenid documents do not mention the Avesta would be an overstatement. The word *abestāg* is Middle Persian and denotes not the corpus of the texts per se but the part in the ancient flexional language translated

and annotated by the Middle Persian part called *zand*. In Darius' time, and in spite of their geographic distance from him, not only could the Avestan texts not have borne the title *Avesta*, but nor can we be sure that they formed a single corpus. All that we can affirm is that no *known* Achaemenid document *directly* cites a *known* Avestan text. I say "known" because the Achaemenid documents are open and because the Avesta is the anthology of a lost literature, and "direct" because Avestan quotations seem to exist in Achaemenid documents, albeit set in "Zitatnamen," the most impressive of which is the very name of Darius. If the Avesta makes no mention of the Achaemenids, it is because the chronology forbids it: the texts constituting it preceded their reign. This early dating has been challenged, to the point of being a minority view from 1896 to 1952 AD. I am nevertheless convinced that the more recent datings are condemned by the progress of our knowledge, and that maintaining them as viable alternatives is a costly waste of time. In spite of their respective silence, the Avesta and the Achaemenid world have in common the worship of Ahura Mazdā and an aversion to gods called **daivas* – two features pertaining to Iranian religious identity as distinct from the Indian one. Defining their relationship is therefore a scientific imperative.

Zoroastrianism or Non-Zoroastrianism?

This legitimate investigation has a constituent flaw: selecting the criterion of comparison. In the mid-nineteenth century, it was virtually unanimously agreed that the core chapters of the Avesta were 28 to 34, 43 to 51, and 53 of the Yasna (72 chapters), that the character called Zaraθuštra was their author, and that he set out in these 17 poems (*hāiti*- "chapter"), arranged in five groups (*gāθā*- "song"), "a monotheistic faith and an inner religiosity that is emphatically antiritualistic and antisacrificial" (Gnoli 1980: p. 183). Thus, Achaemenid religion was compared not to the Avesta as a cultural monument in the broad sense but to the presumed doctrine of its oldest part. From then on the debate revolved around the famous question of whether the Achaemenids were Zoroastrians or not. According to the doctrine as described above, the Achaemenids were good Zoroastrians if: (i) they adored only Ahura Mazdā; (ii) they brought him offerings of cakes and fruit juice only; (iii) they radically rejected their former religion and all those that did not meet their tenets. This is obviously absurd. When the Fortification Archive showed that it was not so, this did not invalidate the question of the relationship with the Avesta but rather supported the critique of traditional opinion on the content of the Gāthās. In reality, the Gāthās and the Young Avesta are both characterized by a process of monotheization internal to polytheism and lastingly compatible with it. They developed a complex and scientific theory of ritual

procedures, considering animal immolation as the keystone of sacrifice, and showed no hostility toward other religious systems (apart from the issue of the *daivas*) or tendency toward proselytism. Where is the difference with the Achaemenids who considered Ahura Mazdā as “the greatest” (*maθiṣta-*) of gods amongst other gods, conducted sacrificial ceremonies, immolated animals, subsidized, even sometimes practiced themselves, the worship of foreign gods (once again, the question of *daivas* aside)?

Saying that the Achaemenids were Mazdean or Zoroastrian would be putting words in their mouths. Like the people of the Avesta, they had no terminology to define a religious affiliation in the modern sense of the term. However, it was assumed that they had, based on a mistaken interpretation of the Avestan words *mazdaiiasna-*, *zaraθuštri-*, and *daēnā-*. The first two, often associated to each other, refer to a distinct ritual situation: offering a sacrifice to Ahura Mazdā like Zaraθuštra at the dawn of time. *daēnā-*, ever since the Gāthās, most certainly refers to the wandering feminine soul that enables the masculine soul of the dead person to gain access to the divine world, and since the Young Avesta, it seems to have served as a title for a set of undetermined texts, but this is never used to denote religion in the broad sense, just as neither the idea of Iran nor the abstract concepts of Mazdaism or Zoroastrianism were known as such in the ancient world. In practical terms, the Achaemenids could say “Ahura Mazdā is a great god” or “I made a sacrifice to Ahura Mazdā” but not “I am a Mazdean” or “I am a Zoroastrian.”

Contrasting the Zoroastrian Mazdaism of the Avesta with any non-Zoroastrian Mazdaism may seem to be a good idea if the intention is to stick to formal data: bring together under the common label of Mazdaism those who worship Ahura Mazdā, and distinguish among them those who refer to the name of Zaraθuštra and those who do not. Reducing the markers of Zoroastrianism to the onomastic criterion alone spares us woolly debates but grants full authority to a random fact or an argument *e silentio*. It is also a superb avowal to the inability to identify a distinctive doctrinal feature.

Yet the existence of a non-Zoroastrian Mazdaism, that is, a Mazdaism that ignores the character Zaraθuštra, is a theoretical possibility that the Achaemenid version is perhaps not alone in illustrating. The Old Avestan Yasna Haptanḥāiti, although set in the omphalos of the Yasna (Y35.2–41), does not mention the name of Zaraθuštra either. The difference is that the theologians of the Young Avesta were able to recover it well before the construction of Persepolis. The question is chronological: when was the old Gāthic character erected as a theologeme of Mazdaism? It is already so in the Young Avesta, and since the source texts of the Young Avesta, whether scattered or brought together, existed at the end of the sixth century BCE, we are brought back to the only relevant question: the relationship between the Achaemenid religion and the Young Avesta.

What Are We Comparing?

Between the Achaemenid religion and that of the Avesta there are thus common points that justify the comparison, but we have to clearly define what we are comparing. From this point of view, it is not the Achaemenid documents that are the problem: they are localized, dated, and, in the case of the Fortification Archive, univocal. But we cannot oppose them to “distant Zoroastrian writings” (Henkelman 2008: p. 101).

The Avesta that we have is not a random mosaic of writings but a juxtaposition of two liturgies, one, long and unitary, the other fragmented into minor rites. The former is skillfully arranged to produce a precise meaning, and it is old. Some of the Avestan texts themselves depict its development, and it seems that the doctrinal outcome was the elaboration of the theonymic calendar, which gives its structure to the anthology of short liturgies (especially the *Yāsts*). The recitative of the long liturgy is itself also an anthology. It was put together, for a precise ritualistic purpose, in order to fuse texts heralding from different ages and perhaps different schools as well. As a result, the link of each of these texts with the rite for which it was originally designed was broken. This was especially true of the old Gāthās, which we know only through the use that the Young Avesta makes of them, and which explains why we are in the dark as to who Zaratustra really was. Hence, the Achaemenid religion cannot be compared exclusively to one or another part of the Avesta and not to the others. It can be compared only to the unit formed by the two liturgies together. The early dating certifies that their constituent texts existed in the time of Darius.

The long liturgy was not uniform; it could vary in its textual composition or in the way it was spread over different times of the day. We know some of these variations, can guess others, and have to assume that others still have been forgotten forever. Yet all of them hinge on the book *Yasna*, which appears to be the foundation, unchanged until today, of the ritual of those who one day would be called Zoroastrians. The constitution of the recitative of the *Yasna* corresponds to a ritual rearrangement which, by recovering and interpreting certain texts from the past, aims to outline the framework of a large and to some extent standardized new ceremony. But it was not intended to be a substitute for any other ceremony, as the anthology of brief liturgies attests by its very existence. It is therefore not incompatible, in principle, with the sacrifices of the Fortification Archive.

The use of the word “Zoroastrian” perpetuates the old mistake of referring to a particular religious category when nothing allows us to determine it. The debate on the “Zoroastrianism” of the Achaemenids is erroneous because we do not have reliable criteria for “Zoroastrianism” at the time. Several of us think today, even if we have not yet written much about it, that the innovation

structuring the thought of the Young Avesta and founding an Iranian religion that was irremediably distinct from the Indian one is the doctrine of the millennia. This doctrine is based on three ideas: (i) that the mental state exists before the material state; (ii) that the material state was at some stage static; and (iii) that the movement that it received carries it toward an end where the two states will find themselves in perfect union. The two liturgies of the Avesta are organized in relation to an analysis of human time (day, month, year) and assume that the Gāthās symbolically reproduce, in the course of the long liturgy, the history of cosmic time, from mental cosmogony to final perfection. This representation implies that Zoroaster is a link in the doctrine of the millennia. For the authors of the Young Avesta, it is neither a historical memory nor a devotional legend but the figure that illustrates the role and destiny of humans in the cosmic order. From this point of view, it is clear that the Achaemenid cosmogony is not incompatible with the doctrine of the millennia, whereas that of the Gāthās (Y44.3–7) is. This relativizes the notion of “Zoroastrianism” remarkably well.

No one knows how far from Persia the Avestan tradition was in 522 BCE. The only sure fact on the ancient transmission of the Avesta that we have is its definitive relocation to Persia. Since Nyberg (1938: p. 38), we agree to consider that the adoption of the theonymic calendar, which was in use when Alexander arrived, is a sign that this had already happened. But there are two problems: the first is that all the dates proposed for the substitution of the old calendar by the new one are conjectural; and the second is that the reign of Darius was a pivotal period where the two Avestan liturgies had possibly not yet been established and were not yet practiced in the Mazdaen tradition as a whole.

Der liebe Gott steckt im Detail

The terminology characteristic of Avestan texts is evident in all existing Achaemenid sources from the beginning of Darius’ reign. It is always a matter of minor details which seem trivial and the technicality of which can easily be overlooked. But because they are more a matter of form than content, and because they trigger no theological emotion, these details have more authority than all the suppositions on doctrine. Consider three examples from three available sources (royal inscriptions, Fortification Archive, and onomastics):

- 1) Twice, between DB IV 60 and 63, Darius mentions Ahura Mazdā *utā aniyāha bagāha tayaīy hantiy*, which Henkelman used in English for the title of his book: *The Other Gods Who Are*. Not being a native English speaker myself, I don’t really have a feeling for how this might be understood. In French, the equivalent, “*les autres dieux qui sont*,” either

means nothing or would have to be understood as “*les autres dieux qui peuvent bien exister par ailleurs*” (“the other gods who may well exist elsewhere”). Actually, *tayaīy hantiy* is identical to the Gāthic expression in which the gods are denoted by the relative *yōi həntī* “those who are,” elliptic expression for the polychronon **yōi āyharəcā hənticā buuain̥ticā*, “those who have been, who are and who will be.” Whichever gods Darius and the Gāthic bard may be referring to – *tayaīy hantiy* and *yōi həntī* respectively – each has in mind “the eternal” (Kellens 1989: pp. 51–64). Moreover, granting the gods of the pantheon the indefinite adjective “all” seems to be a truism, but it actually extends the old divine Indo-Iranian category that the *Viśve Devāḥ*, “the All Gods,” represent in the R̥gveda. Thus, the practice was not peculiar to the Avesta, but the Avesta appropriated it to the point of extending it to all the terms comprising its rich divine titularies: *all* the *yazatas* (frequent), *all* the *daēnuas* (Y32.3, etc.), *all* the *Aməša Spəntas* (Y42.6, etc.), *all* the *ratus* (Vr 2.5, etc.), the latter term being set in the title of the *Visprad*. Darius (DPd 28, etc. *hadā visaibiš bagaibiš*) and the Fortification Archive (*mišebaka*) add *all* the *bagas* to the spectrum.

- 2) The Fortification Archive records the goddess Ārmati (*Išpandaramattiš*) and Frauuašis (*Irdanapirrurtiš*). It is not so much the presence of these two divinities also found in the Avesta that counts – there are others – as the qualification of the former by *išpanda* (*spənta-*) and the determination of the latter by *irdana* (*ašaonəm*). These onomastic additions are not simply self-evident habits of language; the Young Avestan exegesis attentively identified them both in the Old Avesta. Applying the adjective *spənta-* to the name of Ārmati in gāthic verses Y34.9, 10 and Y49.2 is emphasized by Vr 19, and applying the genitive *ašaonəm* to *frauuašiš* in the Haptahatic sentence Y37.3 by Vr 16.2.
- 3) The “Zitatnamen” in Achaemenid onomastics are primarily drawn from the Gāthās (Kellens 2002: p. 424, n. 8). Not all of them are equally as convincing. The most obvious, Artaxerxes (*artaxšaça-*: Y29.10 *ašā xsāθrəmcā*, also in Young Avestan Y20.3 *ašāi xsāθrəm*), is of little interest because it was so tardy. There remains Achaemenes (*haxāmaniš-*: Y46.13 (*təm*) *mōhmaidī... huš.haxāim* “we think that it (= the fire) is a friend”), Darius (*dārayavau-*: Y31.7 *dāraiaṭ vahištəm (manō)* “(that) the best thinking supports”), and Vahyazdāta (Y48.4 *dāt (manō) vahiiō* “it makes thought better,” also Young Avestan *vañhazdā-* “that which makes better”). These Avestan modules, set in an onomastics as heterogeneous as the pantheon of the Fortification, are striking. Not only are the characters they denote important, they also intervene decisively. The confrontation between Darius and Vahyazdāta, arbitrated by the reference to Achaemenes, is at the source of Achaemenid power.

The Invisible Ceremony

The other question is whether the Avestan texts to which the Achaemenids refer were put together into a liturgical recitative. We therefore have to find a ceremony that corresponds at least partially to the *Yasna* that we know. Henkelman insisted that this was not the *lan* of the Fortification. I agree: this ceremony was never explicitly dedicated to a god, perhaps sponsored along with various cults, including Elamite, and organized by men whose name or sacerdotal function describe them indifferently as Persians or Elamites.

However, Henkelman's critique is destructive only for the most rigid conception (2008: p. 216: "sweeping") of Zoroastrianism, the one that characterizes it by the worship of a single god and the horrified refusal of bloody sacrifices. These two criteria contradict the *Yasna* itself, which associates Ahura Mazdā with a dense pantheon, and culminates in an animal offering. Exactly as Darius does, the *Yasna* regularly asserts the predominance of Ahura Mazdā, only to put "other gods who are" next to him, so that the offering is actually made to a rich and complex divine body, an inventory of which can be found in Chapters 16 and 17, followed by the intercalation of Visprad 7. In my opinion it is not impossible that this list may have been open to local gods who were not Iranian or known to the authors of the Avesta.

It is not surprising that an important Iranian ceremony does not have an Iranian name (Henkelman 2008: p. 225). No one knows the former name of the *Yasna*. It is essential to bear in mind that *yasna* was simply the etymology that Eugène Burnouf gave for the term *ijisni* used by the contemporary Parsees. The Avestan priests, both Old and Young, perceived a ceremony to be, above all, an act of speech running through a series of recitation genres: announcement (**niuuīd-*), invitation (**āzauna-*), praise (*staota-*), homage (*nəmah-*), request (*yāna-*), charm (*vaṇta-*), formula (*mąθra-*), etc. A *yasna* "sacrifice" consists in reciting a text in which *yazamaide*, "we sacrifice," is repeated. The rhetorical definition always takes precedence over the factual definition, and its analytical mode deprives us of an overall meaning.

The sponsoring involves a triangular relationship between a god who must be worshiped, an administrative officer who authorizes the supply of offerings, and a man who in one way or another organizes the ceremony. In half of all cases, this man will be referred to as a priest, either by the Elamite word *šatin* or by the Iranian or Iranized word *makuš*. Two other terms, *haturmakša* and *lan-lirira*, appear independently or as complementary to *makuš*, the former for ceremonies other than the *lan* exclusively and the latter exclusively for the *lan*.

haturmakša represents Young Avestan *ātrəuuaxša-*. This does not denote "an auxiliary fire priest," as Henkelman writes (2008: p. 235, n. 516), but defines a temporary sacrificial function. The *ātrəuuaxša* is the member of the college of eight officiating priests who is entrusted with ensuring "the growth

of the fire.” This task is reduced to a set ceremony and is not auxiliary; it is carried out following an ad hoc distribution of roles. *haturmakša* makes it likely that *lan-lirira* also relates to a sacrificial function. Since the *lan* explicitly requires the liquid offering *dauçam/dauçiyam*, it is tempting to see the one who, by his designation, uses it as the “pourer,” that is, the person in charge of the ceremony, the *zaotar*. The documents may be bilingual, but the ritual context is Indo-Iranian.

The *lan* could be the liturgy of the *Yasna*, but there is no certainty about that. This does not mean that this liturgy did not exist in Darius’ day. The Avestan sacrifice, heir to the Indo-Iranian sacrifices, is also based on a triangular relationship: between the god it is being offered to, the officiating priests, and a patron (the *nar ašauuan*). This is the round of the *mižda-*, the “wage” that the patron pays to the priests for them to secure from the gods the “price of victory” and to transfer it to him. The ceremony is a matter which is both private, because it stems from a personal decision, and social, because the patron is the appointed representative of a social group. A cult of this type should have no administrative existence. If there is anything absurd from the Indo-Iranian point of view in the Fortification Archive, it is the sponsoring by the state. In principle, if the king decided to organize a sacrifice, he would have to pay for it himself. But what might the personal property of an Achaemenid king have been?

We need to validate the fact that available sources reveal the juxtaposition of a mixture of Elamite and Iranian cults that is tempting to define as acculturation, and a hyper-cultured movement that uses the same rhetorical stylizations as those of the Avesta. Overlooking the latter would amount to taking the same risk as disregarding the former, that of “telling only half the story” (Henkelman 2008: p. 10), and this time it would be the half that was to prevail in the (very) short term. The fact that this hyper-cultured movement was peculiar to certain Iranian clans, including the Achaemenids, is plausible but does not explain everything. It was the same man who, by his name and his inscriptions, attested to the hyper-cultured movement and, through his administrative measures, subsidized the acculturation. Hence, the juxtaposition was not conflictual. I am not really surprised, for it may be that ancient Mazdaism, which proceeded to continuously create divine entities, was strongly inclined to adopt those that it encountered. Perhaps we should not be talking about acculturation today any more than we did about tolerance yesterday, when in fact there is only an absence of the feeling of incompatibility.

Conclusion

Avestan Mazdaism could appear to us as a distinct doctrine only if it were the work of an individual driven by an explicit intention. As this was not the case, it is a diffuse reality and, as the two liturgies attesting to it are an isolated

document and therefore not comparable, we cannot judge whether the features characterizing it are a narrow specificity or, on the contrary, found throughout the ancient Iranian world. Some elements (Chapter 4) tend to show that Achaemenid religion does not contradict that of the Avesta and shares many of its specific features. But how can we know whether this is a result of relatedness or borrowing? Had the name of Zaratustra been mentioned and the doctrine of the millennia been clearly formulated, the same alternative between similitude and allegiance would apply to them as well. More precisely, it seemed that Achaemenid onomastics, whether human or divine, referred to the Gāthās in the one and to their Young Avestan exegesis in the other. I agree that this evidence may seem insufficient because it is reduced to the juxtaposition of two lexemes. Hence, the similarity between Achaemenid Mazdaism and that of the Avesta would be shown only through the use of the same sacrificial texts. It is a historical fact that, from a certain date, the transmission and commenting on Avestan texts took place in Persia. But how can we find out what recitatives were murmured during Achaemenid sacrifices before the adoption of the theonymic calendar when we do not know how the people of the Avesta used their texts before they were assembled into a liturgy? It is of course tempting to consider that the arrangement of the *Yasna* was designed with the aim of pan-Iranization of the rites. But did kings concerned about establishing a sacrificial rite that matched their power take the initiative or did they inherit it as such, via unknown routes and procedures, from those obscure times about which we know nothing?

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CHAPTER 85

The Heartland Pantheon

Wouter F.M. Henkelman

Introduction

The term “pantheon” can be applied only in a loose sense to the Achaemenid divine world, since there is no evidence for a systematic grouping of all Persian gods as, a millennium earlier, Untaš-Napiriša did with temples for all gods of greater Elam at Čoḡā Zambīl. In addition, one should better refer to a *range* of local pantheons, of which we know only that of the central Persian heartland (Pārsa) to some extent by virtue of more than 300 pertinent texts from the Persepolis Fortification archive (PFA; see Chapter 62 Persia). The royal inscriptions, for ideological reasons, focus almost exclusively on Auramazdā, the king’s mirror image. Evidence from archeology and iconography on deities remains limited and fragmentary, apart from the rich glyptic evidence from the Persepolis archives. The Graeco-Roman sources, sometimes still heavily relied upon, necessarily yield only incomplete and often anecdotal outside views; in a number of cases these are demonstrably wrong. As a general rule, they cannot be awarded independent interpretative authority, but only the role of complementary evidence. The older *Avesta* and the known Zoroastrian tradition at large cannot be counted as primary sources for the study of Achaemenid religion, although they have often been mistaken as such.

There is a case to be made for an Achaemenid Susa pantheon, with an attested cult of Nanāya, and a plausible continuation of the worship of Inšušinak, Šimut, Šazi, and other gods (still venerated in the late Neo-Elamite

period); space, however, does not permit inclusion of this material (see Henkelman [forthcoming]). For the same reason, this chapter will steer away from Anāhitā, whose name is mentioned in only two royal inscriptions from Susa (A²Sa, A²Sd); the Hamadan provenance of a third text (A²Ha) is unproven, if not doubtful (*pace* Knapton et al. 2001; see Henkelman [forthcoming]). Otherwise, there is no conclusive evidence for a general cult of Anāhitā, including the Achaemenid heartland. Herodotus' statement (1.131.3) that the Persians called Οὐρανίη by the name Μίθρη/αν (mss. μίτραν/μήτραν) can hardly be taken to provide "important evidence for Anāhitā and Mithra" (Schwarz 1985: p. 694) or be construed as the earliest reference to the Zoroastrian deity Anāhitā and the spread of her cult by early Achaemenid kings (Boyce 1982: pp. 29–31; see Garrison [forthcoming]). If one chooses to pursue the Herodotean path at all, there are better candidates for the deity evoked, notably the aforementioned Nanāya (cf., similarly, Kellens 2002/03). It seems preferable, however, to concentrate on primary sources, such as the striking seal image (PFS 1308*) showing a worship scene with a seated (statue of a) female deity holding a scepter and wearing a horned headdress (Garrison 2011a: pp. 387–390). Rooted in the accultured milieu of pre-Achaemenid Pārsa, this seal image not only stems from Pārsa but is securely dated and contextualized in the Fortification archive. This is the material on which this chapter will focus.

The Divine World of Achaemenid Pārsa

The Fortification (and Treasury) tablets do not form a state archive in the strict sense, but were unambiguously produced at the behest of the Achaemenid authorities in the context of a large redistributive household economy. This is a fundamental notion when it comes to the gods and cults described in the PFA: all recorded religious activity is known exclusively because the regional state authorities wanted, organized, commanded, supervised, and documented it. Occasional attempts to identify autonomous behavior of "Elamite" priests (as, e.g., Koch 1977: p. 244, 2011: pp. 128–129) or "Median" magi (as, e.g., Handley-Schachler 1998) are flawed by the unargued conjecture that state control could be limited or undermined by religious interest groups (Henkelman 2005, 2008: pp. 249–251, 335–337, 2017: pp. 292–303). Similarly, the idea that the PFA presents a "base" layer of Persian religion, with more lofty gods and more "pure" cultic practices assumed to have existed within the court (so, e.g., Hinz 1970: p. 429; compare Kellens 2012: p. 557), finds no evidential support (Henkelman 2017: pp. 292–303). Though the ideological perspective of the royal inscriptions remains a fundamental source, the mundane Fortification tablets constitute an objective, quantifiable corpus

and the only authoritative guide to the varied religious landscape of the Persian heartland.

Sacrificial commodities recorded in the PFA fall into three categories: those issued “for the gods” (*nappi-na*), hence non-specific; those for various named gods (Sections “Humban” to “Other Deities”); and those for various rites referred to by the name of the rite or its locus (see Chapter 86 Practice of Worship in the Achaemenid Heartland). For the scribes, the object of worship was of less importance than the logistic and economic parameters: a large sacrificial banquet, a regular daily sacrifice doubling as the officiant’s salary, or a monthly offering for a particular cult, each with a specific composition of sacrificial commodities. Whereas retroactive documents are not preserved in the archive, occasional references to standing orders (PF 2067, PF 2068) point to inventories of cults and places of worship, naming responsible officiants and required amounts of flour, beer/wine, fruits, and animals, if not a cultic calendar.

Since the PFA provides an economic setting of cultic practice, and since sacrifices doubled as income for the officiant or as bonus for larger groups of workers, the best way to evaluate the relative importance of individual gods is by aggregate volume of sacrificial commodities (expressed in barley), not by frequency. This chapter draws on data collected and analyzed by Henkelman (2008: pp. 475–478, 519–536), supplemented with recently edited texts.¹

Humban (6455⁺/6585⁺ l.; 32 Attestations)

In terms of aggregate volume of sacrificial commodities, Humban’s prominence stands unrivaled in the PFA.² A few cases where he appears besides Auramazdā bolster this observation: Humban receives almost three times as much. His prominence goes back to Elamite times: attested since the late third millennium BCE and notably venerated by Šilhak-Inšušinak I (twelfth century BCE), Humban became a, if not the, leading god of the Neo-Elamite period, when his name was part of many royal names and Hanni of Aiapir considered him the “great one (greatest) of gods” (EKI 75:4). In Neo-Assyrian commentaries to the incantation series *Šurpu*, Humban is equated with Enlil, befitting a royal god.

Like Mišdušiš and Auramazdā, Humban figures regularly in *bakadaušiyam* celebrations (see Chapter 86 Practice of Worship in the Achaemenid Heartland), again suggesting continuity of his ideologically important position. In some cases, he was worshiped by his own priests; some minor peculiarities in the relevant texts suggest an inherited terminology. In other cases, however, priests served both him and other (Elamite or Indo-Iranian) gods. Humban’s cult was strong in the western Fahliyān region, but certainly not limited to it, or provincial in any sense. Other than that, little can be said of

his divine persona or the nature of his cult, apart from a singular reference to wine libations for Humban at the River Betir (“Hostile” or “Inimical”) and at various wine storehouses (Henkelman 2008: pp. 274–277, 353–384, 499–509, 2017: pp. 315–316; Vallat 2002/03).

Uramasda (2171⁺/2331⁺ l.; 13 Attestations)

Despite his omnipresence in Achaemenid royal inscriptions (Chapter 84), the number of attestations of the name of Uramasda (Auramazdā) and the aggregate volume of his sacrifices in the PFA are relatively modest (Henkelman 2008: pp. 527–529; add Fort. 1301-101:1, Fort. 1316-101:28’f, Fort. 1987-001:1-4). In the past, various remedies have been proposed: reading Napiriša (lit. “Great God”) as an epithet of Auramazdā rather than as a separate theonym, or identifying the *lan* sacrifice as exclusive rite for Auramazdā. Both hypotheses have been falsified (Section “Napiriša”, see Chapter 86 Practice of Worship in the Achaemenid Heartland, Section “All the Gods”), encouraging, instead, a critical re-reading of the royal inscriptions.

Nearly always spelled as a single form (exception: XPc_p 10, but not DPe 24; cf. Filippone 2012: p. 113 n.32) and without word divider (in Old Persian), “Uramasda/Auramazdā” differs markedly from the Gathic bipolar name “Wise Lord” (Mazdā ... Ahura, Mazdā Ahura; also Ahura ... Mazdā, rarely Ahura || Mazdā). Later Avestan “Ahura Mazdā” is closer to the Achaemenid form, but still different in that both parts are inflected. Kuiper argued that these differences are culturally and historically meaningful, that Auramazdā cannot be a direct successor of (early) Zoroastrian Mazdā Ahura, and probably continues a common pre-Zoroastrian deity (Kuiper 1976). The speculation that Neo-Assyrian ^das-sa-ra ^dma-za-áś reflects *Asura Mazdā, hence a bipolar form, is irrelevant here, as the proposal (going back to Lommel) meets with fatal phonological and contextual objections (despite Hintze 1998: pp. 147–149; see Gaspa 2017: pp. 145–146). Regardless of the onomastic question, however, it is preferable to take “Auramazdā” as an Achaemenid god in his own right. This is shown in many aspects, down to the invention of a logogram for his name (in Old Persian) in evident analogy to such symbols for Napiriša, Šimut, and other gods in Elamite.

Until the reign of Artaxerxes II, the only god invoked by name was Auramazdā, often alongside “(all) the gods” (see Chapter 86 Practice of Worship in the Achaemenid Heartland, Section “Royal and Funerary Cults”). He is the “greatest of the gods” (e.g. DPd_p 1), who often – but not in Bisotūn – figures in a cosmological prologue. In a majestic zoom, his establishment of heaven, earth, man, and happiness for man is recounted, leading to the climactic king-making act – in turn followed by a reverse zoom revealing the greatness of the king’s realm and his boundless sway over the nations

(e.g. DNa_p 1–8, XPa_p 1–11; see De Jong 2010b). In Bīsotūn, Auramazdā installs the king, subjects the nations to him, and makes them pay tribute; he leads him victoriously in battle and delivers his enemies to him. Otherwise, Achaemenid inscriptions cite him for prompting construction of palaces and other buildings, witnessing the king’s sacred oath (DB_p IV.44), guaranteeing his law and royal justice, or executing, as *jantar-*, “slayer,” the king’s wrath. The ideological setting – a “theology of empire” (Lincoln 2008) – becomes most clear where chaos and rebellion are at stake: Auramazdā supports the ruler’s every action against these. In this, rebellion against the king is sometimes construed as a failure to venerate Auramazdā (DB_p V.14–7, 30–3; XPh). The referent of this perspective is not a state-enforced cult (for which there is no evidence), nor a prohibition of worship of other deities (who were actively endorsed in and outside the heartland), but a political discourse in which Auramazdā became the patron of the imperial project (Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1999; Briant 2002: pp. 127–128, 550–553; Kuhrt 2007a). The king’s own legitimacy would be expressed by his pious and ritually correct worship (cf. notably XPh_p 39–41) and by the ensuing bestowal of divine favor, for all to see for more than two centuries. The *šip* feast for Auramazdā, referred to by Xerxes (XPh_c 33–34) and well attested in the Fortification archive, must therefore have been an important ideological platform (see Chapter 86 Practice of Worship in the Achaemenid Heartland).

All facets come together in DSk: “Mine is Auramazdā, Auramazdā’s am I – Auramazdā I venerated, may Auramazdā bring me aid.” This remarkably blunt assertion describes a royal god, a deity analogous to Aššur, Marduk, and Inšušinak. Indeed, aspects of Auramazdā’s divine persona, though clearly shaped by and for the Achaemenid kings, find parallels in Assyrian, Babylonian, and Elamite kingship traditions (Skjærvø 1999; Gaspa 2017; Henkelman 2008: pp. 367–371, 2017: pp. 317–319). This also explains why, in the copy of the Bīsotūn inscription displayed in Babylon, the name of Auramazdā could effortlessly be replaced with that of Bēl (-Marduk) (Seidl 1999a,b).

The evidence from the PFA may be lopsided in several ways, but it is not biased by the “grammar of imperialism” (Gaspa) in the way the inscriptions are. The most straightforward and methodologically sound approach is to accept the testimony of the tablets as it stands, i.e. as indication that Auramazdā was not the predominant god in the Persian heartland at the time of Darius. His rise to the status of royal and imperial god apparently did not coincide, or at least not immediately, with widespread worship, again in analogy with such cases as that of Aššur. This is not to say that the king’s religious ideology may not, in the end, have had a wider impact, even on the evolution of Zoroastrianism as such (cf. De Jong 2010a,b), but to style Achaemenid religion as Mazdaist (or even Mazdayasnist) is about as helpful as calling Babylonian religion Mardukist or Assyrian religion Aššurist.

In the PFA, Uramasda may occur alone or in so-called sacrificial lists; he may be the recipient of smaller and larger sacrifices (Henkelman 2008: pp. 372, 527–529, 2017: pp. 278–279, 283–286, 307, 310, 317–319). The dossier, limited as it is, reveals some patterns such as a repeated (annual?) allocation of 40l of beer; recurring collocation with Humban and rivers; the same with (the) Mišebaka (and Šimut). Sacrificial lists, and more generally collocation of deities in a single receipt for sacrificial commodities, do not indicate communal rites, but the combined responsibility of the receiving officiant operating in a given district and period. Bearing this caveat in mind, the phenomenon retains some relevance for the nature of the heartland “pantheon.” A telling example is the joined occurrence of Auramazdā, Napiriša, and Adad³ as beneficiaries of barley “(as) rations/offerings for the gods, ordered by the King” (Fort. 1316-101:28'-29'). Another significant context is that of the aforementioned *bakadaušiyam* celebrations, which underline Auramazdā's role as royal god.

References to the name of Auramazdā in Greek sources contemporary with the Achaemenid Empire are scarce. (Pseudo-)Plato, speaking of the four instructors of the Persian crown prince (1. *Alc.* 122a), says that the first teaches the μαγεία (i.e. cultic knowledge of the magi, not “magic,” as Olymp. in *Alc.* 159 explains) of “Zoroaster, (son) of Ὀρομάζης” as well as matters of kingship/governance (βασιλικά). Aristotle, in his lost *De Philosophia*, purportedly claimed that the magi recognized two principles: a good spirit (δαίμων) called Zeus/Oromasdes, and an evil one called Hades or Ἀρειμάνιος (Ahreman); some caution is warranted though, given the treacherous *Zitatennest* from which this reference to religious dualism stems (Diog. Laert. I.8 = Arist. fr. 6 Rose). Other sources, such as Plutarch (e.g. *Art.* 29.7, connecting μέγας Ὀρομάζης to the sun), are of much later date and often of uncertain relevance for Achaemenid Auramazdā (De Jong 1997: pp. 251–258). Incidentally, the Greek rendering of the theonym agrees with that of the Fortification tablets, Uramasda, which was pronounced /ur(a)mast(a)/ or /or(a)mast(a)/.

The use of “Zeus” for the Achaemenid supreme god is generally, and often too easily, understood as an *interpretatio graeca* of Auramazdā (De Jong 1997: pp. 96–98, 259–263, with references). Herodotus, for one, equates Persian “Zeus” with the sphere of heaven (Hdt. 1.131.2; cf. Strabo 15.3.13), but may be applying Greek rather than Persian views. More pertinent are the epithets of Persian “Zeus” in Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*. One, “the greatest” (μέγιστος; 5.1.29, 6.4.9), reflects the Old Persian *maθišta* (*bagānām*), “greatest (of the gods),” of the royal inscriptions, in turn inspired by Near Eastern precedent such as Elamite *rišar nappirra* “the great one (greatest) of the gods” (for Inšušinak, Humban). Another, “ancestral, paternal” (πατρώος; e.g. 3.3.22, 8.7.3) may well echo common Greek usage; alternatively, it could

refer to a dynastic myth, such as the one of the eponymous founder Achaemenes (Ael. *NA* XII.21; cf. Plato 1 *Alc.* 120e), in which a divine origin is often implied (Henkelman 2006: pp. 820–825; Jacobs 2017: pp. 255–258). In other cases “Zeus” is called “king” (βασιλεύς; e.g. 3.3.21; also Arr. *Anab.* 4.20.3) and, once, “ally and leader” (σύμμαχος καὶ ἡγεμών: 3.3.58), recalling Auramazdā’s character as a royal god and pitiless slayer of the enemy. Plutarch recounts a prayer by Darius III to the “dynastic and royal gods” (θεοὶ γενέθλιοι καὶ βασιλῆιοι; *Alex.* 30.12) or, describing the same scene, to “ancestral Zeus of the Persians and the royal gods” (Ζεῦ πατρῷε Περσῶν καὶ βασιλῆιοι θεοί; *Mor.* 338f); though tantalizing, the very variation in the formula reminds us of the uncertainty of such evidence.

A sacred chariot of “Zeus” (Hdt. 7.40.4, 8.115.4; Xen. *Cyr.* 8.3.12; Curt. 3.3.11) has often been seen as a sign of aniconic tendencies, although, strictly speaking, the emptiness of the vehicle is not mentioned in the sources (just that nobody was allowed to sit on it: Hdt. 7.40.4). The phenomenon relates to Urartean, Assyrian, and other traditions, where the aniconic aspect is unambiguous (Calmeyer 1974). This is not to say, however, that there was a ban on depicting deities, particularly Auramazdā. Herodotus’ unhelpful claims in this regard (1.131.1) reflect Greek philosophical attitudes (cf. Jacobs 2001). Persepolitan glyptic, the prime source for this subject, actually manifests an outright keenness to picture the numinous and the divine in all its fantastic diversity, including a few representations of cult statues (Garrison 2017: pp. 200–216, [forthcoming] §4.4.2). The “figure in the winged disk,” known from Bisotūn, Naqš-e Rostam, and elsewhere, also occurs here, though it is relatively rare. The motif, itself another Near Eastern heritage (perhaps via an Urartean intermediary: Seidl 1994: pp. 118–127), is often thought to depict Auramazdā when used in an Achaemenid context, but that reading is too rigid given the many variations in form and setting. Proposed alternatives are personalized divine blessing, numinous presence, a divine ancestor, and, in the case of the winged disk, a solar association or deity; all these do not exclude a certain connection with Auramazdā, however (for discussion see Root 1979: pp. 169–176; Shenkar 2014: pp. 47–50; Jacobs 1991: pp. 58–65, [forthcoming]; Garrison 2017, [forthcoming]). Altogether, it would seem that Auramazdā’s cult had both iconic and aniconic elements: for Iranians such a mix was not contradictory (cf. Shenkar 2008).

Mišdušiš (2095⁺/2095⁺ l.; 7 Attestations)

The name of this presumably female deity means “(she) who donates generously” (*Miždušī-; Tavernier 2007: p. 98 [4.1.4]), correlating with the only cultic context in which she appears: *bakadaušīyam* celebrations (see Chapter 86 Practice of Worship in the Achaemenid Heartland; Henkelman

2008: pp. 373–374, 381–384, 529–530 [add Fort. 1239-101:1–2], 2011a: pp. 104–107, 2017: 313–315). Mišdušiš is unknown outside the PFA and although the concept of *mišda-*, “reward,” is important in Zoroastrian tradition, the interpretation of the name as an epithet of Aši, the Avestan goddess of fortune, lacks evidential support (despite Gershevitch 1969: p. 174 and *idem apud* Hallock 1969: p. 732; cf. De Jong 1997: pp. 104–105). The closest etymological parallel is *mīlbuṣī*, a Vedic (epithet of a) deity, consort of Rudra (Wright 1997; also Pirart 2015: pp. 52–53). Also relevant is *močδooαvo* (**mišdvan-*; Sims-Williams 1997), a Kushan deity (coin legends; Rabatak inscription of Kaniška I), with some traits of Śiva/Rudra (but see Shenkar 2014: pp. 114–116). The wider Indo-Iranian context may also be invoked to explain the repeated connection with a festival held in the third month, Sakurraziš (Θāigraciš), and relating to the agricultural cycle (see Chapter 86 Practice of Worship in the Achaemenid Heartland). Given this context, Mišdušiš may have been a bountiful, fertility-giving goddess with a strong connection to water/rain (so Golestaneh [forthcoming]).

Napiriša (1880⁺/1920⁺ I.; 26 Attestations)

The name of Napiriša, the “Great God,” is not a taboo name for Humban, as once thought, nor is it used, in the Achaemenid context, as an epithet for Auramazdā (despite Hinz 1970: pp. 428–429). Besides several supporting arguments, the main reason is that the gods occur side by side in Fort. 1316-101:28’-29’ (Koch 1977: pp. 105–107; Henkelman 2008: pp. 215, 250, 330–331, 354–355, 524–526, 2017: pp. 273–287). The syllabic spellings of the name (^{AN}*na-pír-šá-ra*, ^{AN}*na-pír-ir-šá-ir-ra*) follow the development *riša* > *irša*, “great,” suggesting that the name of the god was still understood as a compound (logographic spellings: ^{AN}DINGIR.GAL^{MEŠ}, ^{AN}GAL^{MEŠ}).³

The origins of Napiriša, attested since the early second millennium BCE, are often thought to lie in the eastern highland parts of Elam. This could also account for his popularity in the PFA. The water-providing god and his female associate, shown at the open-air sanctuary of Kūrāngūn (and perhaps that of Naqš-e Rostam), are important in this regard. Though their identity is debated, the likeliest candidates are Napiriša (or Napiriša-Inšušinak) and his spouse Kiririša, the “Great Goddess” of Liyan/Būšehr. Among other indications, the Mesopotamian identification (Comm. to *Šurpu* II.163) of “Naprušu/Napriš” as Ea/Enki, the god of the deep, fresh waters, lends support to this idea (Seidl 1986; Vallat 2002/03: pp. 532–538; Potts 2004). Given that the PFA abounds in mentions of sacrifices relating to harvest, rain, rivers, and reservoirs, and observing that Kūrāngūn fell within the area under its purview, the possibility that Kūrāngūn retained its Neo-Elamite prominence

in the Achaemenid period is worth considering. Also relevant is a Persepolitan seal image (PFS 1312s; Garrison [forthcoming] §4.4.2) showing a male (statue of a) deity, standing on a pedestal and flanked by a fish-man and a goat-fish, creatures associated in Mesopotamia with Ea, but in Iran plausibly with Napiriša.

Twenty different officiants are attested in connection with Napiriša. Their designations vary from simple *šatin* (4) and *makuš* (7) to (*makuš*) *pirramadda* (3) and (*makuš*) *haturmakša* (4; cf. Chapter 86 Practice of Worship in the Achaemenid Heartland, Section “Cultic Personnel”); their names are all Iranian except for two. Elsewhere, the same individuals are associated with a range of other sacrifices, including sacrifices for or at various mountains, for Adad, Auramazdā, Išpandaramattiš, and (the) Mišebaka.

Attestations of Napiriša are dense in the “northern cluster” (10), and significant in the “southern cluster” (5) and the Fahliyān region (5). Though there is a bias in these data (the northern cluster is favored in journals, in which Napiriša is best represented), the importance of the northern cluster is striking as it perhaps fell outside the zone of direct Neo-Elamite cultural influence. It is also in this area that one of three possible cases of a *lan* sacrifice for Napiriša is attested; hitherto, the rite was not found associated with any named god (see Chapter 86 Practice of Worship in the Achaemenid Heartland, Section “All the Gods”). Finally, one text speaks of an *akriš* for Napiriša (Fort. 1785-103), again the first time that the term is connected to a named god (see Chapter 86 Practice of Worship in the Achaemenid Heartland, Section “All the Gods”).

Adad (1715⁺/1775⁺ l.; 12 Attestations)

In the PFA, *šumar/bašur* and *šip* are the most conspicuous cultic contexts for animal sacrifices (see Chapter 86 Practice of Worship in the Achaemenid Heartland, Sections “Sacrificial Feasts and Other Festivals” to “Conclusion”); that both relate to the royal house is surely no coincidence. Otherwise, Adad is the only named god who regularly receives goats/sheep (sheep and cattle in Fort. 0331-102).⁴ In such contexts, Adad’s cult often occurs alongside other rites, notably those for/at *kušukum*, *hapidanuš*, and *tikrakkāš*. Given the agricultural associations of these rites, Adad’s character of rain- and storm-god is probably relevant here (see Chapter 86 Practice of Worship in the Achaemenid Heartland, Section “Terms for Specific Rites”).

Adad was venerated in Elam from the early second millennium BCE; despite his more distant roots, it would therefore be inappropriate to label him a Babylonian god when occurring in Persepolis. Also, whereas there is a concentration of sacrifices in the Fahliyān region (7), where Elamite traditions remained relatively strong, Adad was also worshiped at Anzamannakka, on the

road to Media, and at Tikraš, a town with a markedly royal profile in the Persepolis region. The officiants involved had Iranian and Elamite names and designations (*šatin*, *haturmakša*; Henkelman 2008: pp. 305–323, 519–520, 2017: pp. 279–280 with n.10). A unique text states a combined allocation of one sheep/goat and 101 of beer for Adad (Fort. 1219-101).

Parnakka, the institution's director, sometimes personally intervened to find sheep for Adad and other beneficiaries, accentuating the importance of the cult (Fort. 2012-103). The case confirms that there was no state taboo on animal sacrifice; cases where wine and barley are issued and then exchanged for sacrificial animals therefore cannot represent clandestine operations by Elamite priests (despite Hinz 1970: p. 427; Koch 1987: pp. 270–271). Instead, the rationale of the exchanges was probably to preserve the institution's main capital (animals) and spend reserves that could spoil quickly (grain), hence to economize its cultic obligations (Henkelman 2005, 2017: pp. 291–294). The same attitude informed the use of barley in Fort. 1403-101: after it had been sacrificed (consecrated) to Adad, (the) Mišebaka, and another deity, *kurtaš* (dependent workers) consumed it “as rations.”

Išpandaramattiš (900⁺/900⁺ l.; 9 Attestations) and Earth (210/210 l.; 3 Attestations)

The name of Išpandaramattiš (not: Išpandarakurtiš) was first read correctly by Razmjou, who recognized it as a cognate of Avestan Spənta Ārmaiti, one of the Aməša Spəntas (Razmjou 2001). The Avestan form is problematic: Ārmaiti is difficult to reconcile with its Vedic cognate, *arāmati-*, and must originally have been pronounced as a four-syllabic word for metric reasons (Bartholomae 1904: p. 337 q.v.). The elamograph ^{AS/AN}*iš-pan-da-ra-mat-ti-iš* adds a new dimension to the debate, as it allows for *Spandārmatiš, hence close to the attested Avestan form (so Tavernier 2007: p. 98 [4.1.6]), but also, and perhaps more likely given the spelling *-da-ra-*, for *Spandaramatiš. The latter would be closer to *arāmati-* and the expected Avestan form (as well as Arm. Spandaramet/Sandaramet). The matter is relevant for Išpandaramattiš' cultural context: whereas the goddess' name has been taken by some as one of few straightforward Avestan elements in the PFA (so, e.g., Kreyenbroek 2008: p. 53; Kellens 2012: p. 555), caution seems warranted, also because of the early spread of her cult. It has been argued, for one, that the occurrence of Ššandrāmatā- in Saka Khotanese points to an older (Indo-)Iranian deity (Bailey 1967; Shenkar 2014: p. 168; Pirart 2015: pp. 49–50; *contra* Boyce 1983).

Avestan (Spənta) Ārmaiti, both daughter and wife of Ahura Mazdā, has an emphatic connection with earth, fertility, and prosperity (Boyce 1987; Skjærvø 2002: pp. 403–408). The association with earth may, as Razmjou argued (2001: pp. 8–10), account for the variation between the determinative for

toponyms/locales and that for divinity as markers of the name Iṣpandaramattiš. This variation is certainly significant, as the use of the divine determinative generally was very liberal (cf. Chapter 86 Practice of Worship in the Achaemenid Heartland, Section “Sacred Space: Mountains and Rivers”).

Before the reading Iṣpandaramattiš had been established, Koch proposed to read the logogram ^{AS}KT^{MES}, “Earth,” as reference to Spənta Ārmaiti (Koch 1977: pp. 111–112; different in 1991: p. 100). Apart from the unprecedented use of a logogram for a deity of (Indo-)Iranian origin, this suggestion is weakened by the lack of contextual links with the Iṣpandaramattiš dossier (Henkelman 2008: pp. 324–331). Even the case of Amnara, a magus who sacrifices to Iṣpandaramattiš and other deities in one text (Fort. 0121-102:2-5), and to ^{AS}KT^{MES} and (the) Mišebaka in another (NN 2040: 2-3), offers no clue, as the details of the allocation are different. Alternatively, the use of Neo-Elamite KT^{MES} may be invoked. As it refers to earth as a cosmological element and as water and earth are said to be under the special protection of Napiriša, Kiririša, (and) Tepti (Henkelman 2008: pp. 328–331), it is possible that Achaemenid ^{AS}KT^{MES} referred to a rite with an Elamite background.

Iṣpandaramattiš occurs at least nine times, usually in sacrificial lists of barley allocations (Henkelman 2008: pp. 327, 530–531; add Fort. 0121-102:2-5, Fort. 1717-104:1-3, Fort. 1854-102:1-2). Rites for her and ^{AS}KT^{MES} occurred in a number of places and administrative regions. Once, in NN 2370:01, barley is allocated for the *zannazza*² (of) Iṣpandaramattiš, perhaps a depot of some sort (see Chapter 86 Practice of Worship in the Achaemenid Heartland, Section “Terms for Specific Rites”).

The Avestan roles of (Spənta) Ārmaiti have informed interpretation of some Greek sources on Achaemenid religion: the sacrifices to ‘earth’ noted by Herodotus (1.132.2), the temple of Hera described by Plutarch (*Art.* 23), or the libations for ‘earth’ that Cyrus performed according to Xenophon (*Cyr.* 3.3.22, also 8.3.24). Apart from their limited evidential value, these passages partly reproduce Greek rather than Iranian views (critical discussion in De Jong 1997: pp. 100, 268, 278–279, 354).

Mariraš (450⁺/450⁺ l.; 8 Attestations)

This theonym, if that is what it is, is thought to transcribe *(H)uvarīra, “Sunrise” (Tavernier 2007: p. 98 [4.1.3]; skeptical: Humbach 1979). Gershevitch took it to refer to the “Persian genius of sunrise” (1969: pp. 173–174), although no deity by this name or description is known. The divine determinative is consistently used (^{AN}ma-ri-ráš, ^{AN}mar-ri-ráš, see Henkelman 2008: p. 532; add Fort. 0283-101:1-2, Fort. 1409-101:1-2, Fort. 1610-101, Fort. 1854-102:01-02), but this does not necessarily point to a personified divinity. The alternative would be that it refers to a particular rite performed *at* sunrise.

Such sacrifices are of course well-known in the Indo-Iranian world, but also in Elam (*šīt šamši* ritual: Benoit 2003: pp. 352–353; Henkelman 2008: pp. 450–451; but see Basello 2004). The fact that five attestations of Mariraš pertain to wine is probably relevant here; once (Fort. 1409-101:1-2), 30 l. wine is said to be for a whole year, hence perhaps implying small daily libations (cf. Koch 1987: pp. 257–258). The Greek sources repeatedly stress the importance of the moment of sunrise for certain rites: Cyrus’ daily prayer (Xen. *Cyr.* 8.1.23), Darius’ prayer to “Apollo” for rain (Polyaenus *Strat.* 7.12; §2.13; Section “Deities Not Mentioned in the PFA”), and Xerxes’ libation at the Hellespont and prayer to the sun (Hdt. 7.54; Koch 1977: pp. 94–95, 149, 2011: p. 119; De Jong 1997: p. 366; Kuhrt 2007b: pp. 562–564).

Šetrabattiš (330/330 l.; 5 Attestations)

In Fort. 1987-001:1-4, Uramasda and Šetrabattiš are mentioned separately in an (otherwise broken) list of sacrifices. This circumstance precludes identifying the compound *Šēθrapatiš, “Lord of the Field/Land” (Schmitt 1988: pp. 87–88; Tavernier 2007: p. 98 [4.1.7]; also Pirart 2015: p. 53) as an epithet of Auramazdā, as is the case with the Young Avestan genitive expression *šōiθrahe pati-* (Y.2.16). More promising is Vedic *kṣétrasya páti*, again with the same meaning, but used for a particular deity or genius invoked while plowing the soil and implored to grant fertility to the field (notably RS 4.57.1-8; also RS 7.35.10d, 10.66.13c; see Elizarenkova 2000: p. 129). One may compare Old Lithuanian compound names for similar spirits, such as Žemepatis, “Lord of the Earth” and Laukopatis, “Lord of the Field” (Johansons 1964, esp. pp. 18–20). Whereas the Vedic deity seems to represent an ancient inheritance, the Avestan epithet is probably a secondary development. Achaemenid Šetrabattiš is attested only in sacrificial lists, hence with no details on specific context; a deity comparable to Indian *kṣétrasya páti* would, however, be unsurprising in the agrarian society reflected in the PFA (attestations: Henkelman 2008: p. 534; add Fort. 0362-101:1-5, Fort. 0981-101:4-7, Fort. 1987-001:1-4, Fort. 1201-101:1-3).

Pirdakamiya (270/270 l.; 3 Attestations)

The Iranian name underlying Pirdakamiya is probably *Bṛakām(i)ya-, “he who fulfills wishes” (Hinz 1973: p. 114, Tavernier 2007: p. 97 [4.1.1] refuting Gershevitch 1969: p. 179). This interpretation matches the contexts in which the deity appears: wine allocations for *bakadaušiyam* celebrations, at which ordinary workers participated (see Chapter 86 Practice of Worship in the Achaemenid Heartland). As in the case of Mišdušiš (Section “Mišdušiš”), the cult of Pirdakamiya probably had a strong ideological component as it

wrapped bonus rations (*kāmaka-*) in religious form. At the same time, it served the economic rationale of the Persepolis institution. Unsurprisingly, the deity does not appear elsewhere in the Iranian tradition (Henkelman 2008: pp. 382, 533; 2017: pp. 313–314; see also Koch 1977: pp. 93–94, 1987: p. 265).

Narišanka (270/270 l.; 5 Attestations)

Narišanka is now attested five times, always in sacrificial lists (Henkelman 2008: pp. 531–532; add Fort. 0362-101:1-5, Fort. 0981-101:4-7, Fort. 1201-101:1-3; see also Koch 2011: pp. 120–121). The elamograph transcribes *Narēsanga < *Naryasanga- (Tavernier 2007: p. 98 [4.1.5] after Duchesne-Guillemin 1964: pp. 116–117), the name of the divine messenger known as Nārāśāṃsa- in Old Indian and as Nairiōsaṃha- in the Avesta. Scholars have argued for a direct Avestan loan (Pirart 2015: pp. 53–54, Cantera 2017: pp. 35–37; cf. Humbach 1979: pp. 411–412; Schwarz 1985: p. 688), though it supposes realization of the cluster *nh* (Nairiōsaṃha) as *ng* (Narišanka/*Narēsanga-). As such, Narišanka would be an interesting and unique case. Note, however, that the Achaemenid form is clearly a single word (cf. Uramasda/Auramazdā), whereas the Avesta inflects and sometimes separates the constituent elements (cf. Ahura Mazdā; Section “Uramasda”). Also, all attestations are from the younger Avesta, hence possibly later in date than the PFA.

Zarnama (120/120 l.; 1 Attestation)

The town of Zarnamiya had, according to NN 2653:1-3, a *makuš* serving the rites of *lan*, (the) Mišebaka, Zarnama, and Mt. Battinaša. The same place occurs as the location of a temple (NN 1670), perhaps that of the eponymous Zarnama, i.e. **zarnava-*, “the golden.” If an epithet, it could refer to Anāhitā, but this is only one of several possibilities (Henkelman 2017: pp. 287–290; also Gershevitch 1970: p. 91).

Other Deities

Of the remaining named deities a number are recognizably Elamite. Nabbazabba (PF 2073:1), “the god Zabba,” occurs in Neo-Assyrian transcription as Napsa (Vallat 2002/03: p. 536) and might be an Elamite descendant of Zababa, a Sumerian warrior god (Kiš), attested in school texts from early second-millennium Susa (MDP 27, 134; Tsujita 2016: p. 152). Šimut (PF 0338), the “god of Elam,” the “herald of the gods,” and plausibly identified with the planet Mars, is attested even earlier, in the *Narām Sin Treaty*

(I.9); he still occurs in the inscriptions of Hanni and other later Neo-Elamite texts (Henkelman 2011b). Also occurring in the *Narām Sîn Treaty* is a certain Zit, “Fortune” (I.6; cf. Šiti, Šit in magical spells), whose name, reduplicated and extended, recurs as Ziz-kurra, “Fortune Bestower.” He is honored in a *šip* feast at Pumu (NN 0654; Henkelman 2011a: pp. 102, 154–56). “Halma” (NN 0544:1), if it is not a variant spelling of the fourth Elamite month, may refer to a deity connected with “soil, land” (*bal*), hence with fertility (Henkelman 2008: pp. 332–334). Nah (*na-ab*^{MES}, PF 1802), finally, has been explained as an abbreviation for the name of the Elamite sun-god Nahhunte (Koch 1977: pp. 59–60, Henkelman 2008: pp. 526–527).

The god Minam (NN 2259:9-10) probably has an Iranian name, but an explanation from **vīna-*, “wine,” is far from certain as the root does not occur in Indo-Iranian. At the same time, the connection of the sacrifice with a *pīlu*, a wine storage, is tantalizing (Henkelman 2008: pp. 395–396; see Section “Terms for Specific Rites” in Chapter 86 Practice of Worship in the Achaemenid Heartland). Other cases are even more ambiguous: Turme/Turma (210/210 l.; 3 attestations) is generally believed to represent **Dr̥vā* (cf. Av. Zr̥uan), but *-me* for OIr. /vā/ is problematic (Henkelman 2008: pp. 543–546). The occurrence, in cultic context, of a mountain Turmagisa (see Section “Sacred Space: Mountains and Rivers” in Chapter 86 Practice of Worship in the Achaemenid Heartland) further complicates the case. Hallock’s reading of the theonym Matin (PF 1958:1) is probably erroneous (Napiriša being a better alternative).

Deities Not Mentioned in the PFA

The largest group of sacrifices in the PFA, about one third of the total, is “for the gods” (*nappi-na*), a laconic expression appearing where the divine beneficiary was not relevant for accountability (see Section “Royal and Funerary Cults” in Chapter 86 Practice of Worship in the Achaemenid Heartland).

It is perfectly possible that a few minor deities, hitherto unattested, are hiding among the anonymous “gods” – the case of Zarnama (Section “Zarnama”), who came to light only recently, illustrates this point. The sacrifices “for the gods” at Hunar (older Huhnur) may or may not relate to the ancient cult center of the creator god Ruhurater (Henkelman 2007). The goddess Šašum (older Siyašum), worshiped at Gisat and celebrated in a *šup* (= *šip*) feast according to the Neo-Elamite Persepolis Bronze Plaque (Henkelman 2011a: pp. 123–125; Basello 2017: pp. 361–362), is as yet unattested in the PFA; Gisat, however, occurs as a place of cultic activities, including a sacrifice “for the gods” (Henkelman 2008: pp. 239–240, 314–317, 482–483). The Egyptian Bes, Persianised in the Achaemenid Empire, was portrayed in at least one monumental relief from Persepolis, but is not mentioned by name in the archive (see Abdi 1999: pp. 118–119, 138, 2002: p. 151; Wasmuth 2017: p. 75).

Quite a different matter is the systematic (and willful) omission of the name of a more prominent god; in a simple economic context this would be very unlikely. The deity that comes to mind here is, of course, Miθra, who occurs in one inscription by Artaxerxes III from Persepolis (A³Pa), but not in the PFA. Once, ^{AN}*mi-tar*[...] occurs in cultic context, but the passage is too broken to be of any value (Fort. 1411-101:1-2; on Mišebaka, “All Gods,” see Section “Royal and Funerary Cults” in Chapter 86 Practice of Worship in the Achaemenid Heartland). Sacred horses are mentioned in the archive, but a connection with Miθra is neither obvious nor inescapable (see Section “Sacrificial Feasts and Other Festivals” in Chapter 86 Practice of Worship in the Achaemenid Heartland). By contrast, the Greek tradition abounds with references to Persian Miθra (De Jong 1997: pp. 284–296) and secondary sources yield a wealth of Miθra names (Schmitt 1978), as do the Fortification and Treasury archives (Tavernier 2007: pp. 61 [2.2.43-4], 246–253 [4.2.1097-1129], 541–542). Though in some cases the element *Miça/Miθra is more likely to mean “treaty,” and though onomastic evidence is a treacherous source for historical or religious matters (Schmitt 1991), the trend of Miθra names in Persepolitan sources seems significant, be it in reference to the attitudes of a preceding generation. Fort. 1398-101 presents the problem in a nutshell: it features a *makuš* (*maguš*) called Mitraš, but he is sacrificing to Napiriša and other deities.

The most popular elements in Persepolitan theophoric names, apart from abstract elements (Ir. **mazdā-*, *ṛta-*; El. *kitin*) and the word for god (*baga-*), are *Miça/Miθra, *(H)uvan-/r- (if denoting the Sun as deity), *Māhi- (if denoting the Moon as deity), *Tīra/ī/ya-, Humban, and Šimut (Schmitt 1978, 1991: pp. 116–117; Schwarz 1985: pp. 686–687; Hinz and Koch 1987: pp. 487, 680–681, 1166, 1225–1226, 1230; Tavernier 2007: pp. 539–543). Only the onomastic prominence of Humban is in agreement with the number of his attestations in the PFA; the other deities, except Šimut, appear to be absent from the archive. Greek sources regularly mention not only Miθra but also the Sun and Moon as Persian deities (Nagel, Jacobs 1989; Jacobs 1991); there may be an allusion to Tīri/Tištrya in Polyaeus *Strat.* VII.12 (Calmeyer 1989; *contra* De Jong 1997: pp. 297–299; also Tavernier 2005). If the identification of western Iranian Tīri with Nabû dates back to the Achaemenid period or earlier (Panaino 1995: pp. 61–85, esp. 76; Tavernier 2005), the occurrence of the stylus symbol in Neo-Elamite and Persepolitan seal images may be relevant (Álvarez-Mon 2011: pp. 346–349; Garrison [forthcoming] §4.7.2). Similar observations can be made for the ubiquitous lunar and solar symbols in Achaemenid art (Root 2003; Garrison *o.c.* §4.7.1). While attestations in seal images from the PFA make the absence of the deities in the edited texts from the same corpus more conspicuous, they also argue against the idea of a religious reform, taboo, or simple lack of popularity.

See Chapter 86 Practice of Worship in the Achaemenid Heartland for a general conclusion on heartland religion.

NOTES

- 1 The aggregate values in liters of barley given below are based on standard exchange rates between barley, beer/wine, and livestock. Equivalence of beer and wine is likely but not entirely certain: the higher values cited are based on this assumption, the lower on a 3:1 rate. See Henkelman (2008: p. 475) for discussion. Since new texts are still being edited, the numbers of attestations cited for each deity are likely to change in the future.
- 2 New attestations include Fort. 0251-101; Fort. 1305-101:1, 11; Fort. 1409-101:1-2; Fort. 1610-101:1; Fort. 2135-102.
- 3 New attestations include NN 2653:01-03; Fort. 0121-102:2-5; Fort. 0362-101:1-5; Fort. 0499-101:01-02; Fort. 1316-101:14', 28'f; Fort. 1397-101:1-2; Fort. 1398-101:1-3; Fort. 1402-101:1-2; Fort. 1411-101; Fort. 1717-104:1-2; Fort. 1785-103; Fort. 1854-102:01-02; Fort. 2076-001:1-2; Fort. 2262-101:[1-3], 8-10.
- 4 New attestations include: Fort. 0331-102; Fort. 1219-101; Fort. 1316-101:28'f; Fort. 1403-101; Fort. 2012-103.

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CHAPTER 86

Practice of Worship in the Achaemenid Heartland

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Terminology

The realities of Achaemenid cultic behavior remain largely an unknown: royal inscriptions are practically silent on the subject and the Graeco-Roman sources give only a fragmented view, often contaminated with Greek elements or data pertaining to the Parthian period. The Persepolis Fortification archive (Chapter 62 Persia and Chapter 85 The Heartland Pantheon) offers only a partial remedy in that it gives the designations of the principal actors and sacrificial terminology but little content beyond patterns of frequency, volume, and attendance. Seal imagery adds some information, yet with its own problems (Garrison 2017b).

Most allocations of sacrifices fit into series – however incomplete – with intervals of one month or one year. Two letter-orders from Parnakka (PF 2067, PF 2068) arrange for allocations of wine and barley for the priests (*šatinbe*) at Gimarukkaš, “as has been given to them before” and to be used for “the gods whom (they worship) at Gimarukkaš.” This reveals that the central administration worked with prescriptive documentation regulating sacrifices (a cultic calendar, lists of rites on wax boards, etc.; Henkelman 2008: pp. 283–285); that the director could intervene if necessary; that the authorities recognized the principle that the deities to receive state-sponsored worship were simply those belonging to the place in question.

Commodities issued for the purpose of religious rites in the Fortification archive are qualified by the terms *gal* (here: “portion, food offering,”

Henkelman 2008: pp. 211–213, 290–291) or its Old Iranian equivalents *daušam*, “offering” (**dauča-*, Tavernier 2007a: pp. 461–462 [4.4.22.7]), and *daušīyam*, “belonging to an offering” (**dauçīya*, ibid. 462 [4.4.22.10]). An example is found in PF 1951:1–2, 72 *Mitukka makuš duša daušam lana*, “720 (l. barley), Mitukka the magus received (as) offering for the oblation (rite).” There is no difference in the use of *daušīyam* and *daušam* (pace Schwarz 1985: p. 688).

Most frequently attested, *dauš(iy)am* occurs across the cultic landscape, marking cereals, flour, sesame, wine, beer, fruit, and livestock for Uramasda, Minam, Napiriša, Nahhunte (?), mountains, rivers, months, *lan*, *kušukum*, *hapidanuš*, and “the gods.” Whereas the formal Young Avestan cognate *zaoθra-* is used in a more restricted sense, “libation” (cf. Hinz 1975: p. 91), the wider meaning of *dauš(iy)am* also applies to *zwtr* (**zauθra-*) known from Achaemenid Bactria (Naveh and Shaked 2012, C1: p. 37; cf. Tavernier 2017: pp. 103, 106–108).

There are single attestations of *daušaka*, “belonging to an offering” (**daučaka-*, Tavernier 2007a: p. 462 [4.4.22.8]), and *daušannuaš*. The last term has been explained as **daučanyašna-*, “sacrificial feast” (Hinz 1975: p. 92, Tavernier 2007a: p. 462 [4.4.22.9]), but the reading is uncertain and the form perhaps a mere variant of *dauš(iy)am* (Henkelman 2008: pp. 233 n.509, 560).

Cultic Personnel

Two principal terms used in the PFA to denote the officiants are *šatin* and *maguš* (transcribed *makuš*); the second also occurs in an Aramaic epigraph on PF 1798 (*mgwš*, “the magus”). The Aramaic inscription on a seal showing a cultic scene (PFUTS 0019) reads PN *kmr*, “PN the priest” (Garrison 2017b: pp. 148–149). The ambiguity of this term – does it refer to *maguš*, *šatin*, or a category of its own? – essentially captures the problem of cultic agents in Achaemenid Pārsa.

Whereas *šatin* is an age-old Elamite designation for “cultic expert, (sacrificial) priest,” occurring from the early second millennium BCE onward (Tavernier 2007b: pp. 283–284; Henkelman 2008: pp. 208, 298–299), the term *maguš* is of uncertain origin and etymology. A presumed cognate, *moγu-*, occurs once in a compound in the younger Avesta (Y. 65.7, *moγu.ṭbiš-*), but there it appears to denote a social class (Benveniste 1938; Kellens 2002: pp. 448–451). Significantly, *moγu-* does not occur as a priestly designation in the Avesta, not even in those parts thought to have been composed in or directly after the Achaemenid period.

Classical sources, in as far as they unambiguously refer to the Achaemenid period (excluding, e.g. Strabo 15.3.13; see De Jong 1997: pp. 387–403; Briant

2002: pp. 95–96, 245–246, 266–268, 521, 547–548, 924; Panaino 2011; also Henkelman 1999), suggest a broad definition: a μάγος may be reciter of “theogonies” (Hdt. 1.132.3; Xen. *Cyr.* 4.5.14, 8.1.23), ritual specialist (i.a. Hdt. 7.43.2; Strabo 15.1.68, .3.7; Arr. *Anab.* 6.29.4; Curt. 3.3.9, 5.1.22), diviner (oneiromancer, rhabdomancer, astrologer, physiognomist, etc.) or conjurer of storms (Hdt. 1.107.1, 1.120.1–5, 7.19.1, 7.37.2–3, 7.113.2, 7.191.2; Σ Nic. *Ther.* 613a = Deinon F3 Lenfant; Ael. *VH* II.17; Diog.Laert. I.8, etc.), but also royal educator and advisor (Pl. 1. *Alc.* 122a; Plut. *Art.* 3.3). In short, magi were perceived as “experts in oral tradition and traditional lore, including sacrifice” (Sancisi-Weerdenburg and Henkelman 2012).

The mantic practice of the magi, still more clear in later periods, probably ultimately derived from Babylonia (Panaino 2011: pp. 361–363). It is unclear when and how this influence started, but the well-developed Akkadian and (Neo-)Elamite omen literature from Susa, Haft Tappeh, and elsewhere (survey: Tavernier 2010: pp. 209–215) should certainly be taken into account as a possible intermediary (so already Boyce 1982: p. 33). It may be added that the Elamite scholarly tradition was not as peripheral and secondary, as previously assumed, but known and sometimes even influential in Mesopotamia, and in part still accessible in the Seleucid period (Rutz 2006).

The above, with the uncertain origin of the word *maguš*, shows that a simple dichotomy of Mazdaic (or Zoroastrian) magi and Elamite *šatins* is liable to be reductive. Indeed, most (but not all) magi in the PFA have names recognizable as Iranian, but so do the majority of *šatins* (even if there are more recognizably Elamite names here). This trend continues in the tasks assumed by the two types of officiants. Whereas the classical texts may create the impression that the magi had a monopoly on priestly functions (so, e.g., Panaino 2011: pp. 353–354), the archive shows that Uramasda was almost exclusively served by *šatins* and that these were also the only officiants in *bakadaušiyam* celebrations (Section “Royal and Funerary Cults”). Napiriša, with his ophidian associations, is a telling example of a deity worshiped by both *šatins* and magi (Henkelman 2017a: pp. 278–287). Even though some patterns emerge, the Elamite or (Indo-)Iranian background of a deity or particular rite generally was not a decisive criterion for the involvement of a *šatin* or a *makuš*.

Elamite-Iranian acculturation should not be misunderstood as a perfect mixing resulting in a strictly homogeneous cultural landscape (see, e.g. Henkelman 2011b: pp. 4–6); accordingly, and though sometimes overlapping, the terms *makuš* and *šatin* were not used indifferently. It may well be that the former referred to a historical tradition distinct from that of *šatin*; it is entirely possible that the terms marked distinct socioreligious profiles. If so, however, these hardly register in the PFA, at least not in terms of ethnic or cultural identity. This in itself should be recognized as a historical reality: the

Fortification archive yields no evidence for sharply-defined Mazdaic (or Zoroastrian) and Elamite strata.

One thing is clear in the comparison, however: whereas the term *šatin* never receives qualification and apparently meant “cultic specialist” or “(sacrificial) priest,” *maguš* could be rendered more precise by adding Elamite *lan-lirira* “oblator” or Iranian *haturmakša* (**ātr̥vaxša-*), lit. “he who pokes the fire.” Whereas the former appellative has a long history in Elamite religion (Henkelman 2008: pp. 192, 208–209, 255–261), the latter formally corresponds to Avestan *ātr̥uuuaxš-*, lit. “he who pokes the fire” (Tavernier 2007a: p. 416 [4.4.7.12]; Kellens 2012: p. 557; Henkelman 2017a: p. 327 *ad* 1.28’).

Both terms, *lan-lirira* and especially *haturmakša*, may occur separately, sometimes with individuals elsewhere described as *makuš*. One Yašda, for example, usually occurs as *haturmakša* (PF 0761, PF 0762, etc.), but once as *makuš lan-lirira* (NN 1602) and once without any designation (PF 0760), while the contexts remain the same. This demonstrates the possible equivalence of (*makuš*) *lan lirira* and (*makuš*) *haturmakša* and again warns us not to interpret the latter from a single (i.e. Avestan) angle. Moreover, the variations in the designation of single individuals, including the regular omission of any appellative, point to scribal habits and do not constitute a reliable indication of a *cursus honorum* or hierarchy among cultic personnel (as, tentatively, Razmjou 2004: p. 108, 2005: p. 152; Razmjou and Roaf 2013: pp. 409–410). Having said so, a higher rank is implied in *pirramadda* (not: *pirramazda*), reflecting **framātā*, “chief, foremost,” which occasionally qualifies *makuš* and strikes one as a precursor of MPers. *mōbed* < **magupati-*, “chief magus” (Schmitt *apud* Henkelman 2008: p. 235 n.517).

The broader definition of “magus” suggested by classical tradition agrees with the frequent qualification of the term in the PFA. Also, individuals acting as magi (and *šatin*) may elsewhere in the archive occur in administrative roles (Henkelman 2008: pp. 246–248). Private legal documents from Babylonia (and a comparable reference from Egypt) show the magi in various administrative and entrepreneurial (but not in priestly) contexts (Dandamaev and Livshits 1988; Dandamaev 2012; Jursa and Stolper 2007: pp. 245–246, 251–252). They compare to the most frequent setting in which *haturmakša* occurs in the PFA: as one of three inspectors supervising annual accounts at district storehouses (Koch 1977: pp. 159–164; Aperghis 1999: pp. 155–157). One explanation is that the term *haturmakša* had grown out of its original semantic context, but the other examples just cited make this unnecessary: economic and administrative activities of individuals with cultic responsibilities were mundane in the ancient Near East, notably in first-millennium Babylonia, as they seem to have been in Pārsa. The phenomenon poses a problem only if one adopts a purist view, taking magi in administrative roles as apostates who had given up their “ancestral calling” (Boyce 1982: p. 137) or seeing the

auditing role of the *haturmakša* as a result of the special trust put in the “impartial” Zoroastrian priests (Hinz 1970: p. 429).

Given the firm embeddedness of state-sponsored cultic practice in a household economy like the one centered on Persepolis, nothing would be more natural than an active, institutional profile of at least some of its actors. This principle actually works two ways: main administrators, such as Parnakka and Ziššawīš, may at times themselves assume cultic responsibilities (Section “Sacrificial Feasts and Other Festivals”).

The economic rationale of the operations carried out under the aegis of the Persepolis administration makes it clear that especially smaller, regular sacrifices served the livelihood of the officiant (Henkelman 2008: pp. 281–304). Though precise figures are hard to calculate, it would seem that ration standards for a *šatin* or *makuš* were relatively liberal but not conspicuous. And whereas the administrators willingly accommodated the social standing of, for example, leaders of tribal groups by granting the right of single-seal protocol, no such phenomena are visible with cultic personnel.

The inclusive definition of “magus” helps to elucidate its use at Bīsotūn: it fitted the role of pretender with quasi-supernatural powers required by the folktale-type deployed by Darius (Bickerman and Tadmor 1978). Incidentally, that Gaumāta is once portrayed as “Mede” (DB_a 15) does not reinforce Herodotus’ implausible claim that the magi were one of the Median tribes (1.101) – the statement may actually depend on the Bīsotūn tradition – but seems primarily intended to disenfranchise the enemy from membership of Persian society.

Sacred Space: Temples

When Darius, again at Bīsotūn, applied the ancient royal *topos* of rebuilding destroyed cult centers, he evidently aimed to discredit “Gaumāta” and bolster his own legitimacy. Nevertheless, the exact meaning of the supposedly ruined *āyadanā*, “places of worship” (DB_p I.63–4), has long occupied researchers, not in the least because of the Herodotean dictum that the Persians had no (built) temples (Hdt. 1.131.1: *μηδὲς*; cf. Strabo 15.3.13). As with the purported ban on cult images, the claim serves a philosophical causerie on more (and less) enlightened forms of religion; it does not deserve the immense authority sometimes credited to it, even to the point that the Babylonian and Elamite versions of Bīsotūn, which very concretely speak of the “temples of the gods” (DB_a 24, *é^rMEŠ⁷ šá DINGIR^{MEŠ}*; DB_c I.48, *^{AN}zī-ia-an ^{AN}na-ap-pan-na*), were taken to be metaphorical or reflecting scribal idiosyncrasies (so, e.g., Lecoq 1995; Panaino 2011: pp. 359–360; see Henkelman 2008: pp. 469–473; Schmitt 2014: pp. 147–148; Rossi 2016). In the Fortification archive temples are mentioned, though rarely (Henkelman 2008: pp. 547–548,

2017a: pp. 287–290). As in Bīsotūn, the word used is *ziyan*, continuing older *siyan*, lit. “a place of seeing” (compare Lat. *templum*); in Elamite history, it had been the standard term for religious architecture. Besides the temple of Zarnama at Zarnamiya (see Chapter 85 The Heartland Pantheon, Section “Zarnama”), another, at Hakurtiš, occurs as the destination of a delivery of 9,405 l. wine (NN 2240). Both cases unquestionably suggest an economic role; at the same time, their rarity indicates relative autonomy from the institutional economy evidenced in the PFA. The “temple at Susa,” reportedly plundered in Alexander’s absence (Arr. *Anab.* 6.27.5), fits this picture of sanctuaries with their own capital, even if in the form of statues, implements, etc. (compare Plb. 10.27.10–3 on the temple of “Aenē” of Ecbatana). Temples as economic institutions with their own hierarchy are well known from the Elamite past: the one at Neo-Elamite Susa is described in some detail by Assurbanipal (Vallat 2001).

The growing body of archeological evidence on temple architecture from the pre-Achaemenid Iranian world as well as from Achaemenid satrapies such as Bactria, Sogdia, and Chorasmia offers tantalizing perspectives (e.g. evidence for sacrificial feasting at Dahān-e Ġolāmān, Sīstān), but is as yet unmatched by unambiguous finds from Pārsa. The paucity of excavations at relevant non-palatial sites in the heartland undoubtedly plays a distorting role here (surveys in Boucharlat 1984; Shenkar 2007; Canepa 2013; Callieri 2017; Rapin 2017: pp. 437–444).

The single attestation of a “temple” of the sacrificial table of Cambyses and his queen in Fortification text NN 2174 (coll.) points to a second, developed sense of *ziyan* as any “cult-dedicated building/shrine,” such as the stone architecture in front of the royal tombs at Persepolis (Henkelman and Miri [forthcoming]; Section “Sacrificial Feasts and Other Festivals” below). This use of *ziyan* brings a larger corpus of architectural remains into view, including the annex to the *tacara* of Darius, possibly serving libation or ritual ablution (Razmjou 2010: p. 241.3; Razmjou and Roaf 2013: pp. 417–421). Potentially important cases are the Zendān-e Soleymān and Ka‘ba-ye Zardošt, the twin towers of Pasargadae and Naqš-e Rostam. Various explained, from an ancestor cult, an investiture ceremony, or otherwise, a strong connection to the Achaemenid dynasty is generally agreed upon (Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1983; Stronach 1985: pp. 848–852; Seidl 1994: pp. 115–117; Boucharlat 2003; Potts 2007; compare the hilltop tower at Samadlo, Georgia, with similar plan and, possibly, religious function: Knauss 2006: pp. 87–89). It is entirely possible that the structures would qualify as *ziyan* in the wider sense, certainly in view of the buildings surrounding them; these are known from geophysical surveying in the case of the Zendān and from test trenches in that of the Ka‘ba (Boucharlat and Benech 2002: pp. 24–26; Boucharlat 2003; Benech et al. 2012). Though only further excavations may establish the

function of the towers and the surrounding complexes, a clue is offered by the so-called “tower structure,” a recurrent theme in Persepolitan glyptic (and in later *frataraka* coinage). Sometimes depicted together with a stepped altar, occasionally part of processional and sacrificial scenes, regularly set below the figure in a winged disk, and usually flanked by (royal) attendants, it certainly belonged to the numinous realm (Garrison 2011: pp. 51–55, 2017a: pp. 219–223, 2017b: pp. 117–331; compare the Elamite tower model NMI 7108 in Djafar-Mohammadi 1380/2001: p. 135 no.41).

Classical sources other than Herodotus occasionally refer to Persian temples, notably the sanctuary of a deity comparable to Athena at Pasargadae, reportedly the site of the royal investiture (Plut. *Art.* 3.1–2). Several commentators have pointed out the problematic nature of the passage, not to mention the awkward identification of the deity with Anāhitā (Kellens 2002/2003: p. 319; Binder 2008: pp. 11–23, 2010; De Jong 2010: pp. 545–547). One is left with little more than the notion of Pasargadae as an important cultic/ritual and dynastic site, which was already known from archeological and textual evidence.

Sacred Space: Mountains and Rivers

Just as “iconic” and aniconic tendencies could coexist in Persian society, the occurrence of temples and other built shrines did not exclude worship in non-built environments. In fact, coexistence of temple architecture and open-air sanctuaries or “numinous sites” (Kūrāngūn, Īzeh, Naqš-e Rostam) had a long history in Elam and may have been one of the elements carried over into the Achaemenid period. In the PFA, open-air worship is documented in the form of allocations for rites at/for mountains and rivers.

In at least 25 texts and journal entries, barley, wine, and sheep/goats (NN 2259:3–4) are issued for sacrifices associated with mountains or hills, sometimes several in the same entry.¹ They use either the formula ^{AŠ}KUR^{MEŠ(AŠ)}X-*na*, “for/at Mt. X,” or ^{AŠ}KUR^{MEŠ AN}X-*na*, “for/at the sacred Mt. X.” Mt. Šaki, with seven occurrences, is consistently marked as sacred (or divine); in other cases there is a variation in the use of determinatives. It is unclear whether the mountain itself was the object of veneration or merely the locus for a “mountain sacrifice” for one or several unnamed deities. Given the sacrifices at various storage facilities and at/for rivers, and with the insistence in Greek sources on the importance of mountain summits for the cultic realm (Hdt. 1.131; Strabo 15.3.13–4; Xen. *Cyr.* 8.7.3), one might favor the second option. Add to this that in Bīsotūn, in profane context, mountains and rivers are never marked with the divine determinative (but the sea is: DB_c I.11, DN_ac 23, etc.; compare Hdt. 7.54.1–3). Still, as with Išpandaramattiš (see Section “Išpandaramattiš and Earth”) in Chapter 85 The Heartland Pantheon), the

ambiguity in marking of mountain (and river) names in the PFA may be significant and perhaps point to a conception of the ritual locus as bearing a numinous quality of its own, or as abode of genius loci. At the same time, the physical aspect of being raised, of reaching out to the divine, is relevant as well and compares to the raised platforms of the early Iron Age throughout Achaemenid Central Asia, Afghanistan, and eastern Iran, sometimes thought to have served cultic purposes (so Rapin 2007: pp. 36–42, 2017: pp. 419–426, 442–443; contrast Lamberg-Karlovsky and Magee 1999).

Legible names of mountains occurring in cultic context are, apart from Šaki: Akšena (*Akšēna < *Akšaina- “Turquoise,” Tavernier 2007a: p. 47, [2.2.9]), Ašbapirrasana, Bambanuš², Battinaša (6x; *Patināša-, “Supporter,” cf. ibid. 391 [4.3.163]), Harrimarišturra², Harriyaramanna (2x; “Aryāramna-,” ibid. 68 [2.3.5]), Irkamma², Izziran, Kamarziya (3x; reading uncertain; perhaps *Gāvarziya-, “Sorghum,” ibid. 381 [4.3.78]), Parmabba(na), Širumanda (3x; *Čiravanta, “Beautiful,” ibid. 376 [4.3.44]), Tik(r)a (2x; *Tigra-, “Pointed,” ibid. 398 [4.3.220]), Turmagisa (2x; *Dr(u)va-gaiθa-, “With secure household/cattle,” cf. ibid. 174 [4.2.540]).

The 11 or more sacrifices of wine, barley, and livestock at/for rivers (or lakes, springs, etc.) have the formula ^(Aš)A^{MEŠ} X-na, “for/at R. X,” or ^{Aš}A^{MEŠ} ANX-na, “for/at the sacred R. X” (Henkelman 2008: pp. 224, 377–380, 522, 539–541). The second formula is attested only once (NN 2183:3-4), with R. Marriš, which elsewhere occurs without the divine determinative (NN 2200:1-5). Otherwise, there is one attestation of ^{AN}A^{MEŠ}, but in profane and unclear context (irrigation; PF 1942:32–3). Hydronyms occurring in cultic context are Ayinharišda (Elam.?), Betir (Elam. “Hostile, Adversary”), Huputiš (*^(H)ubōdiš, “Fragrant,” Tavernier 2007a: p. 383 [4.3.93]), Marriš (*Mari-, “Jar,” ibid. 449 [4.4.14.4]), Rannakarra (*Ranakara-, “Joy-maker,” ibid. 393 [4.3.178]), and Š(a)ušanuš.

Whereas there is one explicit case of a sacrifice for a named deity, Humban, at a river, Betir (see Chapter 85 The Heartland Pantheon, Section “Humban”), there is no reason to rule out the numinous significance of the locus of the sacrifice. This is in line with known cases of deified rivers (notably the Vaxšu/Oxus: Bernard 1994 esp. pp. 97–98; Tavernier 2017: pp. 116–119), classical evidence on sacrifices on river banks, at springs, and at lakes (Strabo 15.3.14), and especially the well-known preference for sites rich in water as settings for open-air worship (Álvarez-Mon 2013; Henkelman and Khaksar 2014; Canepa 2014). The last aspect pertains to Elamite Kūrāngūn, Škaft-e Salmān, Kūl-e Farah, and Naqš-e Rostam, as well as (pre-) Achaemenid Bisotūn (majestic seasonal waterfalls, spring lake, water holes exactly below the relief), Naqš-e Rostam (seasonal waterfalls, spring/cistern), Gangnāmeš (waterfall; cf. Brown 2000), and Qadamgāh (spring; cf. Bessac 2007; Boucharlat 2014). Special mention should be made of the Čāleh Ġār 1 cave in the Vešnavēh district

(southwest of Qom), where votive offerings dating from the Iron Age II/III through the early Islamic period were carefully deposited in a shallow pool, perhaps in the context of a rain-making cult. Faunal and botanical remains indicate offerings of, among others, (young) sheep, goat, chicken, cattle, almond, walnut, pomegranate, hackberry, and perhaps peach and apricot. Though Achaemenid ceramic forms are, as always, difficult to recognize, it appears that the period is well represented, notably by vessels that could have served for food offerings and libations (Stöllner et al. 2011; Abar 2011).

The Fruits of the Fields

The terms *hapidanuš*, *tikrakkaš*, and *kušukum* denote physical structures, plausibly each with an agricultural function, but they are also keywords relating to specific rites. *zannazza/zanza*, *pilu* and *balum* are not used as cultic terms in their own right but do occur as the locus of certain sacrifices. All six may carry the determinative AŠ (for toponyms and locales); none occurs with the divine determinative, setting them apart from the cases of temples, mountains, and rivers.

balum refers to a storage complex; in cultic contexts, a series of such facilities may be invoked (Henkelman 2008: pp. 398–400). In PFA 02, for example, barley is exchanged for livestock at six *balums* and sacrificed for Napiriša, Adad, *tikrakkaš*, and *kušukum* (compare PF 0588, Fort. 2012-103 [context broken]). Other cases are: beer for the gods at [...]4 and 9 *balums* (PF 0375; Fort. 2339-111 [with *tikrakkaš*]), sheep/goats for/at the month Karbašiya at 11 *balums* (NN 2259:13–4; cf. Section “Sacrificial Feasts and Other Festivals”), and sheep/goats for/at a *kušukum* at 16 *balums* (NN 2259:15–6).

kušukum (^{AŠ}*ku-šu-ku-um*, (^{AŠ}*ku-šu-kúm*) occurs in 23 texts (Henkelman 2008: pp. 542–545; add Fort. 0331-102, Fort. 1219-101). Koch surmised (1977: pp. 120–125, 1987: pp. 250, 269–270) – but did not explain etymologically – that it is a cognate of *gūšum*, attested only in Akkadian documents from Šimaški and Sikkalmah-period Susa. The reason is that *gūšum* ostensibly denotes a specific and prominent type of animal sacrifice (Scheil 1908: p. 19 and *passim*; cf. Hinz and Koch 1987 s.vv. *gu-šum*, *gu-ú-šum*; De Graef 2009). *kušukum* appears to be a reduplicated form (perhaps **kušum* > **kušukušum* > **kušukušm* > *kušukum*), hence conceivably highlighting a specific semantic aspect, such as the typical locus of the sacrifice.

In the PFA, *kušukum* is the name of a certain locale, but it may also refer to a certain type of sacrifice (Hinz and Koch 1987 s.v. h.*ku-šu-kúm*; Henkelman 2008: pp. 374–375, 401). As a physical structure, it may double as a storage or receptacle of grain (NN 0269, NN 2544). Just as *kušukum* sacrifices can take place at a series of *balums*, commodities may also be issued for a series of

two, six, or nine *kušukum* sacrifices; a nine-day sequence of *kušukum* sacrifices may explain this phenomenon (PF 1953:4–6). Animal sacrifices are relatively well represented (11 texts; Fort. 0331-102 involves sheep/goats *and* cattle); the sheep/goats were mostly acquired through the exchange procedure (Henkelman 2005). Barley and *tarmu* sometimes were “transferred from the *kušukum*” and replaced by beer (Tavernier 2016). A letter expresses concern over the lack of pregnant sheep/goats in the royal herds, perhaps implying a preference for new-born animals for *kušukum* (NN 2544). Offerings for/at a *kušukum* may be unqualified, “for the gods,” or for a specific deity: Anturza and Našiz[...] (PF 0770, NN 0269, both uncertain; cf. Tavernier 2007a: p. 511 [5.4.1.1]). In sacrificial lists (Chapter 85 The Heartland Pantheon, Section “Uramasda”), *kušukum* regularly occurs besides the storm-god Adad and rites at/for *tikrakkaš* (a storage facility?); *hapidanuš* (a reservoir?), Napiriša (the god of the deep waters), and the month Karbašiya (VI). A connection with rain, harvest, and fertility would seem logical (so Golestaneh [forthcoming]).

hapidanuš refers, concretely, to a “water place/container, reservoir” (**āpidāniš* < **āpidān(i)ya-*; Tavernier 2007a: p. 437 [4.4.8.3]; cf. Razmjou 2010: pp. 232–233 on *apadana*) and metaphorically to “reserve” (in wine, grain, livestock, etc.; Hinz 1975: p. 32; Henkelman 2008: pp. 396–397). The first meaning is probably intended in the four or five cases where sacrificial commodities are issued “for/at *hapidanuš*” (Henkelman 2008: pp. 541–542; add Fort. 2012-103 and, perhaps, Fort. 0000-102:5). Apart from the combinations already mentioned, *hapidanuš* once occurs besides Sakurraziš, the name of the third month (cf. Section “Sacrificial Feasts and Other Festivals”), an indication of a possible rain cult (so Golestaneh [forthcoming]).

tikrakkaš, “pointed (object, structure)” (**tigra-ka-*; Tavernier 2007a: p. 398 [4.3.220]) may refer to a place (Tikrakkaš, Persepolis region) or to a (locale for a) particular rite. The original referent may have been the beehive granary with its conspicuous dome, but this solution remains hypothetical as long as the word is not attested in this presumed primary meaning (Koch 1987: pp. 267–268; Henkelman 2017b: pp. 82–97, esp. n.68). Offerings “for/at *tikrakkaš*” are usually sheep/goats, but beer, wine, and cattle occur as well. The term is regularly attested with (rites for) Adad and *kušukum*, and sometimes *hapidanuš* (Henkelman 2008: pp. 541–542; add Fort. 0331-102 and Fort. 1219-101; context broken in Fort. 2339-111, Fort. 0276-101:5).

pilu usually denotes a wine storage (see, e.g., PF 1954), but twice it occurs as the locus of cultic activity: wine offerings at four *pilu* for Humban (NN 0153; cf. Chapter 85 The Heartland Pantheon, Section “Humban”) and animal sacrifice “for Minam of/at the *pilu*” (NN 2259:9-10; see Chapter 85 The Heartland Pantheon, Section “Other Deities”).

zanza (also *šanša*) may be a general term for institutional entrepot (deposit of wine and barley; working place of *kurtaš*), or at any rate a storage facility. In NN 2370:1, a *makuš* receives barley, “(for) the *zannazza?* of Išpandaramattiš,” possibly the same word (see Chapter 85 The Heartland Pantheon, Section “Išpandaramattiš and Earth”).

Although the specifics of the above rites and locales are unknown, the general connection between storage facilities, hence with harvested produce, and certain types of cultic activity is undeniable. The regular use of livestock and sometimes cattle in the sacrifices shows the importance of the rites and emphasizes the agricultural orientation of Achaemenid Pārsa. In this, it should not be forgotten that a *balum*, *hapidanuš*, or *pilu* was also an institutional facility: all terms listed here represent local nodes in the administrative grid. Though similar rites for the fertility of the fields and flocks or the protection of the harvest may well have been practiced by common Persians, the ones recorded are different in that they are embedded in an institutional setting. Not only will the offerings have served an economic purpose (feeding the administration’s personnel), they were also necessary to safeguard the institution’s core task, to guarantee and increase agricultural production in the empire’s heartland.

Terms for Specific Rites

Apart from designations of larger celebrations (Section “Sacrificial Feasts and Other Festivals”), two technical terms for specific sacrificial rites occur: *lan* and *akriš*. The rites for (the) Mišbaka and for the “Remaining gods” (Section “All the Gods”) probably also belong here, as they take their name after the sacrifice, not after the god or the locus of the sacrifice.

lan, “oblation” (^{AN}*la-an*, rarely without divine determinative) is the most widely-spread sacrifice (Henkelman 2008: pp. 211, 238–240, 481–497), and with an aggregate value of the commodities allocated of 33,664⁺/36,064⁺ l. (in 102 occurrences) it is by far the largest item on the cultic budget.² Designations borne by officiants tending to *lan* are *šatin* (8), *makuš* (19), (*makuš*) *lan-lirira* (16), (*makuš*) *pirramadda* (3), and *haturmakša* (15; Section “Cultic Personnel”). Strikingly, no designation is given in 36 texts, about a third of all cases (not including five fragmentary contexts; cf. Razmjou 2004: pp. 107–108; Henkelman 2008: pp. 208–209). At least 60 individuals acted as *lan* performer, underlining the importance of the rite.

A one-time hypothesis that *lan* constituted an elliptic reference to the exclusive “official rite for Auramazdā” (see, e.g. Koch 1977: pp. 129–140, 1987: pp. 241–245, 273–274, 2011: pp. 111–115) is compromised by the circumstance that contexts in which Auramazdā and *lan* occur are mutually incompat-

ible (Razmjou 2004; Henkelman 2005: pp. 140–143, 2008: pp. 214–253); it is falsified by three texts documenting *lan* sacrifices for Napiriša (Henkelman 2017a: pp. 273–287, 324 ad l.14'). This does not mean that all cases of *lan* were for this deity, but rather that *lan* was a sacrifice *sui generis* that probably could be celebrated for a series of deities. In this, it is important to note that *lan* has a number of cognates in Achaemenid Elamite, including *la-* (“to send, sacrifice”), *lan lirira* (“*lan* performer, oblator”), and *lankul* (“offering-worship”). The word *lan*, already known in Middle Elamite, was taken on board by Persian culture not as a single term but as part of a productive semantic field (Henkelman 2008: pp. 192–203, 241–242, 254–280, [forthcoming-a] on *lankul*). This alone should have been a warning against strictly Zoroastrian interpretations.

In economic terms, *lan* is defined by regular amounts of grain (barley, *tarmu*) and wine/beer issued for it, besides occasional allocations of fruit (dates, apples, figs) and sheep/goats. The regular allocation of flour, otherwise rare in cultic contexts, probably was for baking sacrificial loaves. With the specific amounts (matching certain ration standards) and its regularity throughout the year, *lan* may be understood as a basic income for people with cultic obligations, a daily sacrifice substituting rations or salary payments (Henkelman 2008: pp. 209–211, 281–304; cf. Razmjou 2004: pp. 105–106). As such, it can be compared to *ginû* and other regular sacrifices in Babylonian temples, or with later Sasanian and Zoroastrian sacrifices such as *drōn* (Razmjou 2004: p. 114; Panaino 2005; Henkelman 2008: pp. 299–303; Kreyenbroek 2008: p. 53, 2010: pp. 107–108). The single reference to *lankul*, “offering-worship,” in a context where *lan* is expected (PF 0772) offers a slight but valuable indication as to the religious significance (Henkelman 2008: pp. 261–263). Another intriguing detail is the allocation of 30 sheep/goats for the performance of *lan* rites at the plantation (*partetaš* = **paridēda-*) of Pasargadae (ibid. 427–52).

The second term, *akriš* (*ak-ri-iš*, ^{AN}*ak-ri-iš*, once *ak-ri-im*), occurs at least ten times (Henkelman 2008: p. 551; add Fort. 0424-106:1, Fort. 1390-102:1, 2, Fort. 1785-103, Fort. 2052-101:1, Fort. 2096-104; aggregate value: 6,520⁺/6,250⁺ l.). The allocated amounts are relatively important, up to 3,000 l. barley (for a whole year?) issued for *akriš* at Pasargadae (Fort. 1390-102:1). The same place occurs in four monthly allocations of 500 l. each, suggesting a regular pattern; this is also borne out by wine allocations of 120 l./year (NN 1715, Fort. 0424-106:1, Fort. 2096-104; see Koch 1977: pp. 141, 153 and Henkelman 2008: pp. 283–284, 287 n.649, 390–391). The importance of the rite is also underlined by where it takes place: Hiran (Nīrīz region), Marabbaš (presumably the tribal town of the Maraphioi) and, especially, Pasargadae (Henkelman 2008: pp. 390–392, 2017a: 312 n.64).

The alternating endings in *-s/-m* suggest an Iranian loanword. Hinz, comparing Av. *gar-* (better *ā-gar*) and ostensibly thinking of the theogony-singing magi of Hdt. 1.132.3, proposed **āgriš*, “Lobgesang[opfer]” (Hinz 1975: p. 24; cf. Tavernier 2007a: p. 461 [4.4.22.1]). Earlier, he had also considered a connection with *agriya-*, “loyal” (Hinz 1970: p. 425); among other possibilities, comparison with Av. *ā-gar*, “to wake up,” may be mentioned. The contexts in which *akriš* appears yield little as to the purpose of the rite: it is usually said to be “for the gods,” except once, when it is performed “for Napiriša” (Fort. 1785-103).

All the Gods

In the Elamite version of Bīsotūn, (Auramazdā and) “the other gods who are” or “as many as there are” (III.78, *nap daya[p ap]pa liprina*) alternates with “the other gods” (III.79, *nap appa dayabbe*). The Akkadian version has “all the gods” (103-4, 104, *ilāni gabbi*). These parallels forbid academic readings of the Old Persian formula (IV.61, 62-3, *aniyāha bagāha tayai hanti*) as “gods of existence” or the like, rather than “the other gods who are” or “as many as there are” (Henkelman 2017a: p. 308 n.60). In later inscriptions, one finds *hadā (visaibiš) bagaibiš* (OP), *nap (marbepda) idaka* (Elam.), and *itti ilāni gabbi* (Akk.), “with (all) the gods” (see notably DPd 14-5, DPf 13-4, DPg 24), which similarly expresses an inclusive, universalist aspiration (so already Gnoli 1983b). The same transpires from the polite greeting formula in letters in the Fortification archive, *širini nappi ak sunki hutukni*, “may your wishes be fulfilled by the gods and the king” (Henkelman 2010: pp. 669–670 n.9). As archival contexts show (see, e.g., NN 2362:1-5), *nappi* in the last expression must be understood as a plural, “gods” (despite Hallock 1969: p. 737) and evidently refers to *all* the gods of the heartland, if not the empire.

References to commodities allocated “for the gods” (^{AN}*na-ap-pi-na*, ^{AN}*na-ap-na*, ^{AN}*na-pan-na*, etc.) take up about one third of all texts on cultic activity in the PFA. In such cases, “the gods” does not refer to an inclusive rite with an universalist outlook but simply functions as a scribal shorthand: the seal impressions in conjunction with statement of location, date, and names of the principal actors involved sufficed from a bureaucratic point of view (Henkelman 2008: pp. 221, 556–565). By contrast, the terms Mišbaka, “All-Gods/All the Gods,” and *nap šaš(š)ap*, “the remaining/other gods,” probably point to well-defined rites in their own right and perhaps to well-defined groups of deities.

In a personal communication, cited by Hallock, Gershevitch explained Mišbaka as a transcription of **Miça-baga*, “the god Mithra” (*apud* Hallock

1969: p. 19 n.11; cf. *ibid.* 151, 559, 564, 732). The alternation between *še* and *šá-a* (^{AN}*mi(-iṣ)-še-ba-ka*₄, ^{AN}*mi(-iṣ)-šá-a-ba-ka*₄) unambiguously points to OIr. /ai/ or /ē/, however. For this reason, Hinz instead proposed *Visai-Bagā (*Visē-bagā), “All the Gods” or “All-Gods” (Hinz 1970: p. 428; cf. Tavernier 2007a: p. 462 [4.4.22.11]). The occasional, less precise spelling ^{AN}*mi-iṣ-šá-ba-ka*₄ occurs in parallel contexts and has the same group or rite as referent (*pace* Tavernier *o.c.* 246 [4.2.1088]).

Despite being excluded on formal grounds, the reconstructed form *Miθra-baga is occasionally cited (e.g. Frye 1984: p. 172 n.4; Schwarz 1985: p. 687; Razmjou 2004: p. 104; cf. Boyce 1982: pp. 139–140 [“Mithra and the Baga”]). Indications that Miθra sometimes was understood as the *baga* par excellence (Sims-Williams 1991; Schmitt 1991: p. 118) played a role in this, as did, it seems, the feeling that Miθra simply ought to be present in the PFA (see Schmitt 1987: pp. 144–146; Koch 1987: p. 256 n.93; Section “Other Deities” in Chapter 85 The Heartland Pantheon). Other, ingenious but speculative solutions such as *Miçahya (“a genitive used datively,” Gershevitch 1969: p. 175) or *Miça hya бага (G. Lazard *apud* Sims-Williams 1991: p. 180 n.18) are problematic for a range of reasons, including the fact that Persepolis scribes understood Mišebaka as a single word, hence preceded by the divine determinative (not: ^{AN}*mi(-iṣ)-še* ^{AN}*ba-ka*₄).

There are currently 19 attestations of “Mišebaka” in the PFA (Henkelman 2008: pp. 554–556; add NN 2653:1-3, Fort. 0121-102:2-5, Fort. 1316-101:15’f., Fort. 1398-101, Fort. 1403-101 (?), Fort. 2262-101:[1-3], 7-10). Its frequent inclusion in sacrificial lists, besides named deities, mountain rites, etc., does not mean that the term refers to a single god (*pace* Dandamajev 1975: p. 238) but that, as a rite, it was well-defined. Its particulars and beneficiary/ies are more difficult to fathom: we are dealing either with a divine collective or rite known as the “All-Gods,” or with a type of sacrifice honoring “All the Gods.”

Taking *Visai-Bagā/*Visē-bagā as “All the Gods” would align it with the expression *hadā (visaibiš) багаibiš* of the royal inscriptions; it supposes a cult for all the (great) gods of the empire, hence with strong ideological undertones. Though the rite for (the) Mišebaka was not unimportant (aggregate value: 1819⁺/1819⁺ l.) and was celebrated in a range of places, the pertinent contexts offer only slight support for this reading. In Fort. 1403-101, barley for Adad and Mišebaka (reading uncertain) appears to be consumed afterward by *kurtaš*, “workers.” This potentially indicates a larger celebration, but the reference is isolated: individual allocations of wine and barley for (the) Mišebaka typically are relatively modest and do not appear in conjunction with terms for sacrificial feasts, such as *šip* and *bakadaušiyam*. The occurrence of wine from the king for (the) Mišebaka (NN 2265:1-4) is less meaningful

than it may seem, as royal involvement is known for a series of different rites (cf. Section “Royal and Funerary Cults”).

The interpretation favored most is that of a divine collective, usually in reference to the common Vedic syntagma *Viśve Devāḥ*, “All-Gods” (Koch 1977: pp. 87–90; Schmitt 1987: 144–146; Kellens 2012: p. 555; compare Lit. *Visi Dievai*, “All-Gods”). Note, however, that *Viśve Devāḥ* may refer to a collective of 10, 13, or more minor deities, but also to *all* the gods of the pantheon, or to a class of gods. In case of a collective, the divinities are said to be the issue of *Dakṣa/Dharma* and “*Viśvā*,” they may be venerated in a household ceremony known as *vaiśvadeva* (also associated with *Agni*), are associated with the *śrāddha* rite for ancestors, and protect against malignant spirits; scholars have accordingly compared them with the Manes of Roman religion (Dowson 1957: p. 363; Stutley and Stutley 1977: pp. 317–318, 337; Bunce 2000: p. 657). Yet, though a possible connection with the **Visai-bagā*/**Visē-bagā* is tantalizing, a formal linguistic parallel alone does not turn the presumed mechanical exchange of *devāḥ* for *bagā* into a historical fact. Even more problematic are speculations on a facile semantic transposition by which the “All-Gods” in Iranian context became to be understood as the *Aməša Spəntas* (as, tentatively, Koch 2011: pp. 115–118; see Knäpper 2011: p. 107).

A provisional conciliation of the two options here discussed (divine collective vs. “All the Gods”) would be to take *Mišebaka* as “All-Gods” (in line with its use as a single word), yet referring, at least in the first place, to a particular rite rather than to a collective. This view seems to fit best with its frequent occurrence, beside a variety of named gods and rites, in sacrificial lists. The “All-Gods” rite, in turn, may have been performed for all the gods *tout court*, or for a collective of (minor) deities, perhaps related to the Vedic *Viśve Devāḥ* (further discussion in Koch 1987: pp. 255–257; Henkelman 2008: pp. 224 n.491, 231, 234 n.514, 325–26 n.755).

Whereas **Visai-bagā*/**Visē-bagā* formally (but perhaps not semantically) relates to the **visai bagā* sometimes invoked in the royal inscriptions, a more rare expression, *nap šaššaka/šašap*, “the remaining/other gods,” evokes the aforementioned “other gods who are/as many as there are” of *Bīsotūn*. It occurs only twice, in NN 0318 and Fort. 2336-103 (published in Henkelman 2017a: pp. 307–309), both in the contexts of a *bakadaušiyam*, hence in clear ideological context (Section “Sacrificial Feasts and Other Festivals”). Given this setting, it is not hard to imagine a sacrifice “for the remaining/other gods” as a specific rite aimed at deities who received no separate cult (or at least not at that time and place), i.e. to make sure that no deity was excluded. This interpretation of *nap šaššaka/šašap* is akin to the all-embracing or universalist-imperial understanding of “*Mišebaka*.” The two terms could be (near-) equivalents.

Royal and Funerary Cults

The king and the royal house are important in many sectors of the Persepolis administration, but not everything was royal in the strict sense. This is also true for the cultic sphere, where offerings are occasionally marked as being from, or ordered by, the king. This occurs with *lan* (2×), (the) Mišebaka, *kušukum*, Uramasda, Napiriša, and Adad (Henkelman 2008: pp. 231–232, 2017a: pp. 279–280 n.10). It is hard to judge such individual cases. Only NN 2544 is a little more informative in that it speaks of sacrificial animals coming from the royal herds in connection with *kušukum*, implying a regular concern for this rite (Section “The Fruits of the Fields”). Other than that, the king himself or his immediate representative presided over the large *šip* celebrations at Pasargadae and elsewhere (Section “Sacrificial Feasts and Other Festivals”), and he reportedly made lavish sacrifices each time he entered Pārsa (Xen. *Cyr.* 8.5.21, 5.26, 7.1).

Royal involvement was very visible in the funerary realm, not only in the person of the deceased king, who received regular sacrifices, but also in that of his successor, who was responsible for their organization.

BM 72747, a text from Sippar’s Ebabbar temple, documents regular sacrifices (*sattukku*) of beer for the statue/stela (*šalmu*) of King Darius during the first year of Xerxes; the supervision of this cult was in the hands of the royal administration (Waerzeggers 2014; cf. Rollinger 2011: pp. 44–46). Unique for the Achaemenid period, the text has a possible parallel from the reign of Nabonidus (Kleber 2008: pp. 271–275) and agrees with the well-established cultic importance of royal images in Mesopotamia and Elam. Chronologically close to the Achaemenid period, a late Neo-Elamite inscription, perhaps by Atta-hamiti-Insušnak, arranges for the institution of sacrifices “for my statue/stela” (*zalmu*, EKI 89:5; cf. Henkelman 2008: p. 362 n.846). One may tentatively relate classical reports on the image (εἰδωλον) of the deceased laid on the royal catafalque (Hdt. 6.58.3 [Lacedaemonians and Persians]; Ael. *VH* 12.64 [Alexander]; perhaps Diod. 17.115.1 [Hephaestion], Curt. 3.3.16 [royal ancestors]) as part of the elaborate funerary rituals (Briant 1991, 2002: pp. 522–523; on the extinguishing of royal fires in Diod. 17.114.4 see De Jong 2010: pp. 550–551).

As Waerzeggers explains (2014), the cult for the statue of Darius at Sippar was modeled on the traditional prebendary system. In this case, the right to organize for, and profit from, the regular sacrifices was given to a certain Tattannu, plausibly a noble Persian. The practical arrangements, however, were in the hands of his deputy. A similar setup is found in the Persian heartland: the caretakers of the *šumar* (tomb or funerary monument) of Hystaspes at Pārsa are identified as *lipte-kutip*, “chamberlains,” but they were represented at the *šumar* by their servants (*libap*). Other, similar texts speak of the *šumars* of

Kanbuziya/Cambyses and his spouse Upanduš/Phaedym(i)e at Narezzaš/Nīrīz or refer to the *bašur*, “sacrificial table” of Cambyses, Phaedym(i)e, and, perhaps, that of Hystaspes. Bakabadda is a *šumar*-guardian who occurs at least five times in the context of the Cambyses and Phaedym(i)e texts; according to Ctesias (F13 §§9, 15, 23 Lenfant), a chief “eunuch” (i.e. court official) of Cyrus, Cambyses, and Darius charged with the care for the royal tombs, answered to the same name, Bagapates. It is possible, but hard to substantiate, that this is the same individual (Henkelman 2003: pp. 154–166; Tuplin 2008: p. 322).

The quantities of wine, barley, flour, and livestock mentioned in the *šumar* and *bašur* texts are considerable and suggest monthly if not daily sacrifices (Henkelman 2003, 2008: pp. 287–289, 546–547; add Fort. 0446-102, Fort. 0875-102, Fort. 1681-003, Fort. 1569-102, and Fort. 2286-101, all published in Henkelman and Miri [forthcoming]). They evoke reports by Strabo (15.3.7) and notably Arrian (*Anab.* 6.29.4–7) on the hereditary line of magi guarding Cyrus’ tomb at Pasargadae. These received a sheep, some flour, and wine per day, and a horse per month.

Arrian knows of a “small building” (οἶκημα μικρόν; 6.29.7) the tomb-guarding magi had at their disposal. This expression may refer to the unexcavated structures surrounding the Qabr-e Mādar-e Soleymān at Pasargadae (visible on aerial photographs from the 1930s). It probably would also apply to excavated buildings on the edge of the terraces in front of the rock-cut tombs of Artaxerxes II and III at Persepolis. Sami suggested that these were “the residence of the Mobeds and spiritual leaders” performing funerary rites (Sami 1977: pp. 84–85). He furthermore opined that a 1.03 m square stone slab with a sunken channel parallel to its edge had served as sacrificial table or platform (ibid. 86; cf. Canepa 2013: pp. 326–327; Razmjou and Roaf 2013: pp. 421–422). All these elements come together in NN 2174, where 24 sheep/goats are issued for the *siyan bašur-na*, “temple/shrine of the sacrificial table” at the *šumar* of Cambyses and Upanduš (Henkelman and Miri [forthcoming]; Section “Sacred Space: Temples” above).

Though horses do not occur with *šumar* or *bašur*, there are two texts on the feeding of horses *kulla-na*, “of worship” (PF 1670, PF 1765); the second of these specifies that they are royal. A recent study suggests that *kulla-* belongs to the cultic realm, allowing the possibility that the horses were fattened for sacrifice. Such sacrifices are mentioned in the classical literature, sometimes in connection with Miθra (Hdt. 7.113; Curt. 3.3.11; Strabo 11.14.9; Xen. *Anab.* 4.5.35; etc.). Given the royal context, however, the connection of the horses *kulla-na* in PFA with the funerary cult is perhaps more likely (Henkelman [forthcoming-b]).

Funerary sacrifices probably were not limited to deceased members of the Teispid and Achaemenid dynasties, but the nature of the available evidence

obscure non-royal contexts. The sacrifices for *Irdanapirrrurtiš* are sometimes invoked in this context (two occurrences: both in a list of sacrificial commodities for a whole year; Henkelman 2008: pp. 533–534). The second part of this compound has been plausibly explained as a transcription of **fravartiš* (Hinz and Koch 1987: p. 770; Koch 2011: p. 121), the western Old Iranian cognate of Avestan *fravaši*, which, originally, may have referred to the spirits of the heroic dead (so Boyce 2001). As for the first element, Kellens (2012: pp. 555–556) thought of **rtavanām* (Gen.Pl.). This would give “**fravartiš* of the righteous” for the compound, in analogy to *ašāunqm fravašš* in *Yasna* 37.3. As Pirart (2015: pp. 49–50) and Tavernier (2017: pp. 110–115) have pointed out, however, the Old Iranian genitive plural is rendered differently in Elamite. Analysis of *irdana* as a genitive *singular* (Pirart) is equally unlikely (expect *ir-da-ma-na*; cf. XPh_c 40, 46); interpretation of the form as *ṛta* + Elamite suffix *-na*, hence “for Arta and Fravarti” (Tavernier, with query) is unlikely given the contexts. Given these problems, the relevance of *Irdanapirrrurtiš* to funerary sacrifices remains uncertain.

Sacrificial Feasts and Other Festivals

Continuing older Elamite *šup*, *šip*, “sacrificial feast,” occurs in the PFA as the most conspicuous act of cultic behavior. It is unclear whether the term was a generic one for larger celebrations or denoted a single specific rite. What is clear is that *šip* took place in autumn, not at a fixed date (it could be celebrated twice in the same year); a connection with the slaughter of surplus lambs before winter has been suggested. Other than that, the relevant texts largely pertain to sites with a markedly royal profile (Pasargadae, Appištāpdan, Tikrakkaš) and betray organization at the highest administrative level. In most cases, *šip* was presided over by the institution’s director or his deputy, probably in their function as the king’s highest representatives. This last inference would agree with the Elamite version of Xerxes’ so-called *daivā*-inscription (XPh_c 33–4), where the king states that he celebrated the *šip* appropriate for Auramazdā (cf. Akk. *išinnu*, “religious festival” [XPh_b 33]; OP *ayadaḫ*, literally “I worshipped,” [XPh_p 40-1] may be interpreted in the same vein).

The number of animals (sheep/goats, cattle, ducks) and amounts of grain and wine allocated for *šip* in the PFA suggest hundreds of participants. For this and the above reasons, *šip* would be comparable to (i) the feast organized by Peucestas at Persepolis in 316 BCE (Diod. 19.22.1–3), at which occasion military and local gentry were seated in concentric circles around central altars; (ii) a similar feast celebrated by Mithridates VI in Cappadocia in 82 BCE (App. *Mithr.* 66 = 276-9), said to continue ancestral tradition from Pasargadae. This last element, with the data from the PFA, suggests interpre-

tation of two monumental plinths in the center of Pasargadae's "sacred precinct" as an installation for *šip* or similar celebrations (Henkelman 2011a; add Fort. 2037-101:27'; cf. Canepa 2013: pp. 329–330 on Dahan-e Golāmān).

Apart from Auramazdā (XPh), only one named god appears in connection with *šip* (Zizkurra, Chapter 85 The Heartland Pantheon, Section "Other Deities"). The situation is different in the case of *bakadauši*(š) "(feast) belonging to the sacrifice for a god" (**bagadauṣi*š) and its derivative *bakadaušiya*(m), "belonging to *b*." (**bagadaušiya*-). Attested beneficiaries are Auramazdā, Humban, Mišdušiš, Pirdakamiya (see Chapter 85 The Heartland Pantheon), "the remaining gods" (Section "All the Gods"), and the third month (below). This selection betrays an ideological context: whereas Auramazdā and Humban qualify as royal gods, Mišdušiš and Pirdakamiya have names that fit the ideology of gift-giving and reward, which otherwise surfaces in the extensive system of bonuses documented in the PFA. In the case of *bakadaušiya*m, scribes regularly stipulated that after the sacrifice, workers (*kurtas*š) consumed the commodities (grain, wine), confirming their ideological and economic rationale (Henkelman 2017a: pp. 306–307, 310).

anši and *pumaziš* are hapax legomena. An ^{AN}*an-ši* involving four kinds of fruit in quantities that could satisfy a larger group of attendants was celebrated by the deputy-director, Ziššawiš (NN 2486:47'-48'; Henkelman 2008: pp. 549–550, 2011a: pp. 99, 109–110). A *pu-ma-zí-iš* once occurs in the context of *šip* celebrations (NN 2259:25-6; see Henkelman 2008: pp. 407, 414, 549–550).

There is no direct indication for any of the great *gāhānbār* or lesser festivals of (pre-)Zoroastrian tradition, nor are there primary sources to substantiate reports on certain festivals (*tykta*, *sakaia*) in the classical sources or to confirm their religious nature (see De Jong 1997: pp. 367–386; cf. Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1991). Sacrifices were sometimes made, however, "for" (during, at the occasion of) the third month, Sakurraziš/Θāigraciš, and the sixth month, Kar(a)baši(ya)š (Henkelman 2008: pp. 332, 396, 398, 552–553). The name Θāigraciš may mean "(time/festival) related to garlic" (**θigaka*-; cf. al-Bīrūnī's *Šīr-sūr*, "feast of garlic"), but relevant contexts also seem to suggest a rite intended to evoke a pluvius year (see Golestaneh [forthcoming], with references). As for the sixth month: a connection with the, purportedly, autumnal feast of *Mithrakāna is not excluded, but is hard to substantiate. Strabo mentions an annual tribute of 20 000 foals by the satrap of Armenia τοῖς μιθρακάνοις, "for the *Mithrakāna" (11.14.9; compare Ath. 10.434e). An Achaemenid date is not made explicit, however, and can therefore only be assumed on the basis of the Old Iranian form of the name (De Jong *o.c.* 371–77; Henkelman 2011a: p. 108 n.53). It may be remembered that Miθra is conspicuously absent from the PFA texts edited thus far (see Chapter 85 The Heartland Pantheon, Section "Deities Not

Mentioned in the PFA”). The same corpus holds no clues pointing to a (royal) new year celebration, agreeing with Babylonian evidence suggesting that the king tended to spend this time of the year at Susa (Waezeggars 2010; cf. Ath. 12.513f).

Conclusion

Chapter 85 The Heartland Pantheon and this chapter on Achaemenid practices of worship show a number of central elements. One is the long shadow cast by the king of kings: the image of Auramazdā in the inscriptions is almost entirely in the service of royal ideology and, to repeat the expression, the “theology of empire.” This continues in the economic context of the Fortification archive, where royal benevolence, largesse, and piety are given a stage in certain large sacrifices. The cults for (the) Mišebaka and *nap šaššaka/šāšap* may belong to the same universalist aspiration that pervades the official words and images of the Achaemenid rulers.

At the same time, the economic context of the Fortification archive is a real and important factor in its own right, not a coincidental setting. Appreciation of this aspect leads to a perception of the degree to which cultic behavior was interwoven with everyday life and with the goals the administrators of the centralized economy had been charged with. Notably agricultural production is important in this regard, with sacrifices at a range of storage facilities, for the storm-god Adad and for, it seems, the field-spirit Šetrabattiš.

Whereas the initial reaction to the overwhelming material from the Fortification archive had been to fit it into the framework of the royal inscriptions and the hypothesis of Achaemenid Zoroastrianism, the last two decades have witnessed a correction toward study of the Elamite texts and the seal images as sources in their own right. In this, the Elamite impact on Persian culture and the very genesis of the latter have received full emphasis. In the cultic realm, this means recognition of the important place of Humban, Napiriša, and other gods of Elamite descent, but also study of the roots of such rites as *lan*, *šip*, and *kušukum*. To be added to this is the logical role of Elam as conduit of Mesopotamian traditions. This is not the whole story, however: theonyms and terms for rites that are recognizably Old Iranian equally need to be properly contextualized. In this regard, and as the Vedic parallels mentioned here and in Chapter 85 suggest, the Indo-Iranian stratum appears to be of greater relevance than the Avestan parallels, of which there are few.

It is not an overstatement to say that the primary evidence from the Achaemenid heartland has revolutionized debates on Achaemenid religion, nor can it be denied that this development has diminished the relative weight of secondary sources such as the classical sources and the Avestan tradition.

This does not mean that these sources should be ignored, but it certainly does imply more rigorous analysis as a prerequisite of their relevance.

NOTES

- 1 See Henkelman 2008: pp. 224, 392–393, 536–539 and 2017a (Fort. 1316-101:15'f.), to which add NN 2653:1-3, Fort. 0362-101:1-5, Fort. 0499-101:1-2, Fort. 0981-101:4-7, Fort. 1201-101:1-3, Fort. 1238-101:1-2, Fort. 1307-101:22, Fort. 1398-101:1-3, Fort. 1854-102:1-2, Fort. 2052-101:2, Fort. 2262-101:1-3, 7-12.
- 2 See Henkelman 2008: pp. 511–519, to which add: Fort. 0121-102:2-5, Fort. 0325-101, Fort. 0424-104:18', Fort. 0863-110, Fort. 1075-101, Fort. 1307-102:21 (?), Fort. 1316-101:14', Fort. 1390-102:3 (?), Fort. 1393-101:2-3, Fort. 1397-101:1-2, Fort. 1402-101:1-2 (?), Fort. 1409-101:1-2, Fort. 1717-104:1-2, Fort. 1782-103, Fort. 1808-102, Fort. 1854-102:1-2, Fort. 1980-101:1, Fort. 2354-101:23, NN 2611, NN 2653:1-3, PF-Teh. 03.

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CHAPTER 87

Funerary Customs

Pierfrancesco Callieri

The funerary customs of Iran during the Achaemenid period stem from the tradition of the Iron Age I–III (1300/1250–550 BCE): while for the latter the information we can gather is based only on the archeological evidence, offered by the many excavated graveyards, for the former we may rely also on written sources. On one hand, we have the Greek authors, and on the other hand the Zoroastrian texts, namely the *Vidēvdāt* section of the *Avesta* with later Pahlavi commentaries of Sasanian age.

The Achaemenid Empire was characterized by its huge dimensions and its multiethnicity, which is reflected in the funerary customs, too. Indeed, the local traditions of the empire's provinces are beyond the scope of this book, being very much a matter of the respective cultures, and we must therefore confine our exposition to a series of observations regarding the funerary customs of the Iranian plateau, the area which during the Achaemenid period we know through Greek sources as Persia: only by defining a framework from the information on the funerary customs of the commoners of the Iranian plateau during the Achaemenid period is it possible to set those of the Achaemenid kings, from Cyrus the Great to Darius III, in the right perspective.

Archeologically speaking, the Achaemenid period corresponds to the last phase (Iron Age IV) of the Iron Age. The Iron Age on the whole corresponds to the period to which the first appearance of Iranian peoples on the plateau is attributed. Bearing in mind that inhumation had clearly been the most widespread funerary custom on the Iranian plateau since at least the sixth millennium BCE, one important innovation of the Iron Age is the definitive

establishment of graveyards systematically separated from the inhabited settlements – a choice that developed from a trend already perceptible in many major early urban sites of the Bronze Age. So much is borne out by the many graveyards belonging to the Iron Age which have been excavated in various areas of the Iranian plateau. Several of these graveyards remained in use to the end of the Iron Age and beyond, reaching into the Arsacid period. Illustration of these antecedents is therefore necessary, and not only because of the possible chronological overlapping with the Achaemenid period: it is in fact important to verify on one hand how much the Iron Age IV phase (Achaemenid) differed from the three preceding phases (Iron Age I–III), and on the other how much those of the Achaemenid kings differed from the most widespread funerary customs of the Iranian plateau.

The remarkable variety of Iron Age funerary customs in Iran must be attributed not only to social differences but also to the high degree of cultural group differentiation. The most evident example is the presence in the many cemeteries of northern Iran, particularly Azerbaijan and the Caspian region, of typically Scytho-Sarmatian catacomb graves, with the body deposited in a chamber dug on one side of the access pit. This tradition was deeply rooted in the Bronze Age of central and middle Asian cultures, along with the presence of particular weapons of the Scythian area, or the presence of horse burials. The close association of funerary customs with the religious beliefs of the various groups makes this differentiation particularly significant.

In the Iron Age cemeteries of Iran a large variety of grave types is evidenced: simple pits dug in earth or bed-rock; cists with stone facing; catacomb graves with a chamber dug on one side of the access pit; grave chambers built in stone masonry or mud-brick; depositions of bones in urns (normally for infants). Graves could be uncovered or covered by large slabs or a tumulus, and the surface appearance could be indicated by stone circles on various plans, at times with a stone slab standing vertical on the surface at the point corresponding to the head.

The deceased were deposited lying on one side in variously contracted positions or less frequently on their back (Cinquabre 1978: fig. 1). Fragments of fabrics and gold plaques suggest that the bodies were clothed in rich garments in some cases. The funerary objects were placed mostly near the head or the feet, apparently in connection with their different functions. Large bronze cauldrons with animal bones may be evidence of ritual offerings, as also the horse burials. On the whole, the presence of vessels containing provisions suggests their supposed use by the dead and thus belief in an afterlife. Social stratification is suggested by the size and level of funerary objects and special social roles are also indicated by the various functions of the funerary objects.

Secondary burial, i.e. removal of bones from the original anatomical connection of the first inhumation and disposal in a new position, is a well-known

practice observed during the Iron Age, largely due to the reuse of graves for successive inhumations. This practice produces results similar to those deriving from the Zoroastrian custom of collecting the bones after defleshing, which is also a form of secondary burial even though the reasons behind the two practices are totally different. Multiple burials are also present.

Particularly interesting is the Cemetery B at Siyalk, which was used from c. 1100 BCE to c. 600 BCE: the simple pits dug in the soil at times contain two or three bodies; in instances of reuse of a grave, the new body is buried in the same pit over a layer of earth separating it from the earlier inhumation, or beside a bronze vessel where the bones of the first skeleton have been collected in a secondary deposition. The graves were covered by a small tumulus of elongated shape on which large stone or terracotta slabs made a gabled roof giving the grave the appearance of a hut, as in more northerly traditions (Ghirshman 1939: pp. 27, 81).

On the whole, comparing this picture with the evidence of the Iron Age in a neighboring area such as India, we remark the absence of incineration in Iran, a feature that probably flows into the stream of antecedents of the Zoroastrian prohibition.

A substantial continuity is shown by similar traditions persisting in the Achaemenid period, as attested by the limited number of commoners' graves known to us for this age.

At Takht-e Solayman, in northwestern Iran, below the levels of the Sasanian-age fire sanctuary, excavations have brought to light, under the floors of rooms and courtyards in an inhabited settlement, several inhumations with graves cut into the rock concretions formed by the water of the lake: the pits show an oval or rounded rectangular plan, the bodies generally buried lying on the back with contracted legs (Naumann et al. 1975: p. 140). There is evidence of reuse of the graves. The bodies were buried with funerary objects, at times accompanied by a dog: two isolated dog skeletons were also found. Circular pits of various dimensions hewn in the rock at a short distance from one of the extremities of the graves have been interpreted as depositories for funerary offerings, a feature of the Iron Age tradition also to be seen at various other sites. Doubt has recently arisen over the generally accepted dating of the settlement to the Achaemenid period, based on the presence of three-flanged arrow-heads and other artifacts typical of the Achaemenid period, as well as the results of C14 analyses, due to the presence of "Western Triangle Ware," dated rather to the fourth to third centuries BCE (Kaniuth 2011–2013).

Again in the north of Iran, the Daylaman region of Gilan shows several plain or stone-walled graves in which the funerary goods include artifacts of probable Achaemenid dating, pointing either to reuse of earlier tombs or continuation of the previous tradition. In the cemetery of Sang-e Shir, near Hamadan, a group of plain earth inhumations, with skeletons lying supine

with contracted legs, has also been attributed to the Achaemenid period on the basis of funerary objects, and in particular a Carian silver coin of the fourth century BCE (Azarnoush 1979: p. 282). At the site of Dosaran in Zanjan district plain earth or catacomb graves have also been recorded (Rahbar 1998). That inhumation was the typical funerary custom of the Persians during the Achaemenid age is also confirmed by the graves of a Persian garrison at Deve Hüyük in northern Syria (Moorey 1980).

Inhumations in earthenware coffins, with a few plain earth graves, were discovered at the cemetery of the Persepolis Spring, c. 1 km to the north of the Achaemenid Terrace. The sarcophagi recall very distantly those of coeval Mesopotamia, but unlike the latter were made up of two parts which could be adjusted to the size of the body, and then covered with a terracotta lid. The presence of funerary goods suggests persistence of the Iron Age tradition, albeit in a rather poor way. While most of the finds are probably post-Achaemenid, some are of Achaemenid date, and it is doubtful whether these should be taken as a basis to date at least some of the graves to the end of the Achaemenid period (Schmidt 1957: pp. 115–123).

That inhumation was the commoners' custom, as attested by the limited archeological evidence, is also confirmed by classical sources: Ctesias (F. 8d, 38), Plutarch (*Artaxerxes*, 18.7), Curtius Rufus (3.12.13–14).

A different type of burial came to light at Susa (Elam), where two bronze bath-tub coffins were discovered on the Acropolis in 1901: one of the graves is dated to the end of the fifth century BCE or preferably to the fourth century BCE, while the second grave was almost empty. In the case of the former, the body was deposited supine on the bottom of the coffin with many precious ornaments and surrounded by a rich provision of stone and metal vessels, which characterize the deceased as a member of the elite; the funerary custom is in line with the preceding Elamite and Mesopotamian tradition (Frank 2010). Again at Susa excavations have brought to light fragments of anthropoid coffins similar to anthropoid coffins from Sidon and Cyprus (Razmjou 2005: p. 156), as well as other evidence of inhumations (Qahéri-Paquette 2016: p. 14). While Susa does not belong to the Iranian plateau but to Lower Elam, this evidence of a bath-tub coffin rich in funerary goods for an aristocratic burial, with its antecedents not only at Arjan but also in the coffin reportedly from Ziwiye, can help us imagine the shape of the coffins which were originally placed in the royal tombs of the Achaemenid kings.

Now that dating of the rock-cut tombs previously attributed to the Median period has been corrected to the late- or post-Achaemenid period, the initial evidence of monumental funerary architecture in Iran is to be seen in the tombs of the Achaemenid kings. The earliest of them is the co-called “Qabr-e Madar-e Solaymân” (the tomb of the mother of Solomon) at Pasargadae (Fars) (Figure. 87.1), identified with the tomb of Cyrus II the Great, which



Figure 87.1 Pasargadae, tomb of king Cyrus. Source: Reproduced by permission of B. Jacobs.

was transformed into a mosque in the thirteenth century CE by adding a circle of column drums from the Palace S (which were removed during the restoration carried out in the 1970s), a *mihrab* inside the chamber, and an inscription on its façade. The tomb is built entirely in limestone blocks and shows a chamber, rectangular in plan with horizontal ceiling and gabled roof, set on a high plinth (13.35×12.30 m) of six receding tiers, the three lowermost of greater height than the three uppermost, with entrance on the north-west façade. On the front triangular gable over the door a raised disk was carved in bas-relief, probably bearing a rosette decoration (Stronach 1978: pp. 35–37).

Identification of this as Cyrus' tomb is based on its striking similarity to the description of the tomb given by Aristobulus, who accompanied Alexander the Great on his conquest of the Persian empire and was quoted in Strabo's *Geography* (15.3.7) and Arrian's *Anabasis* (6.29.4–11): the Greek source states that Cyrus' body had been buried in a golden coffin (*phelos chrysē*) placed in the chamber between a table and a bed bearing garments, jewels, and weapons. The only feature mentioned by this and two other different Greek sources but absent from the Pasargadae monument is an inscription in Persian and Greek through which Cyrus is said to have attributed the tomb to himself (Strabo 15.3.7–8). In the looting which Alexander failed to prevent despite his orders, the lid of Cyrus' coffin was removed and his body thrown out; the orders which Alexander gave Aristobulus to restore the tomb included deposition in the coffin of the limbs of the body (*sōma*) still intact. The fact

that the body could be well preserved after more than 200 years from the death has fostered the interpretation that it was in fact embalmed rather than merely covered with wax, as was the custom of the Persians reported by Herodotus (Jacobs 2010: p. 98): although embalming is a practice alien to the spirit of Zoroastrian principles, Herodotus noted that the custom was also reserved to Scythian kings:

[the king's] body enclosed in wax, his belly cut open and cleansed and filled with cut marsh-plants and frankincense and parsley and anise seed, and sewn up again (Herodotus 4.71 after Godley)

This is not the only connection with the Scythian world, for the lamentations and hair cutting performed by the Persian soldiers for the death of one of their chiefs (Herodotus, 9.24) recall the behavior of the Scythians on the demise of their kings (Herodotus, 4.71).

An element which has not been duly considered is the fact that the architectural tradition of the Pasargadae funerary monument only shares certain elements with the funerary custom of Iron Age Elam, and in the case of Cyrus' presumed Elamite origin, we should expect the grave of the king to have conformed to the Elamite tradition, as illustrated, for example, by the recent finds of Arjan and Ram Hormoz. Similarity is, however, limited to the use of a metal coffin and sumptuous burial objects, but as far as we can tell given the accidental nature of these discoveries, these Neo-Elamite tombs were built as brick or stone underground chambers. Rather, the cultural inspiration of Cyrus' tomb seems to be represented by the gabled covering with slabs observed in the Siyalk B cemetery (Ghirshman 1939: p. 81), rendered in monumental architecture under influences from Ionia, Anatolia, Urartu, and Mesopotamia, and showing only a formal similarity with an Elamite *ziqqurat*.

At the same time, interesting confirmation of the Greek sources mentioning the sacrifices for the king comes from the Elamite Persepolis tablets, mentioning daily and monthly allocations for funerary sacrifices at the time of Darius I (Henkelman 2008: pp. 427–431). In these Elamite texts, the practice of these sacrifices is associated with funerary monuments of kings and important members of the royal house, called *shumar*. The description of these ceremonies in the Elamite texts fits perfectly with what Aristobulus reports regarding Cyrus' tomb at Pasargadae: the Magi in charge of the tomb had, since the times of Cambyses, been receiving daily from the king a sheep together with a certain amount of flour and wine and, every month, a horse for sacrifice for Cyrus (*es thusían tōi Kúrōi*) (Arrian, *Anabasis*, 6.29.4, 7). On the other hand, the instructions given by Cyrus to be buried in the earth with neither gold nor silver, reported by Xenophon in *Cyropaedia* (8.7.25–26), are completely devoid of historical value, given the rhetorical character of the text.

A monumental tomb with gabled roof, similar to Cyrus' tomb but of smaller dimensions, is the co-called "Gur-e Dokhtar" at Bozpar (Bushehr) (Vanden Berghe 1989), which is commonly dated to the late- or post-Achaemenid periods on the basis of various considerations, the most cogent of which being the clamp shape (Stronach 1978: p. 302).

More difficulty has arisen over interpretation of the so-called "Takht-e Rostam" (Figure 70.5), consisting of a two-stepped platform in limestone blocks (13.28×12.22 m), approximately half-way between Persepolis and Naqsh-e Rostam. The monument was excavated by E. Herzfeld, who considered it to be the unfinished tomb of Cambyses II: his digs completely destroyed the monument, which was reconstructed in the 1970s by G. and A.B. Tilia with several replacements for the missing blocks. Three contributions have questioned Herzfeld's attribution in respect of different aspects. M. Roaf dated the monument to the early years of Darius I's reign on the basis of the clamp types and the toothed chisel marks (Roaf 1983: p. 150). W. Henkelman, confirming the monument's function as a tomb, conjectured possible utilization for Darius I's father Hystaspes on the basis of the mention in the Elamite Persepolis Fortification tablets of the existence of a *shumar* to Hystaspes near Persepolis: in the same Elamite texts, a *shumar* to Cambyses seems in fact to have existed in Neyriz, far off in the direction of eastern Fars (Henkelman 2003). On the basis of a detailed survey of the traces of stone working J.-C. Bessac and R. Boucharlat observed that the almost complete polish of the outer surfaces indicates that the construction was indeed finished, and that it had originally had at least a third row of blocks. The authors' investigation of Herzfeld's sketch highlighted the original presence in the filling at the center of the platform of two pit-graves limited by a row of regularly cut blocks, approximately measuring 2×1 m, with shallow inner rim fitted for a lid, while the restoration reconstructed one pit only. Subsequent to comparison with Cyrus' tomb at Pasargadae, very similar in plan and dimensions, the authors propose the existence on the Takht-e Rostam of a chamber built in stone, bricks, or wood (Bessac and Boucharlat 2010). More recently W. Henkelman has also evidenced the indication in Herzfeld's sketch of "bones" in Layer II that could not be specified (Henkelman 2011–2013: p. 410).

The founder of the "Achaemenid" dynasty proper, Darius I, accompanied the radical innovations in the structure of the Empire with a similarly radical innovation in the royal tomb typology, inaugurating the rock-cut type which would last until the end of the dynasty (Figure 87.2; cf. Figure 94.4). The site which Darius I chose to prepare the ground for a royal necropolis is Naqsh-e Rostam, 6 km to the north of the Persepolis Terrace, where a high cliff offered a suitable topographic site. P. Calmeyer surmised that the main inspiration for Darius came from the Urartian rock-cut tombs, and a Urartian model would have also suggested the role of Ahuramazda as the King's God (Calmeyer 1975: pp. 101–103, 113).



Figure 87.2 Naqsh-e Rostam, tomb of king Darius I. Source: Reproduced by permission of B. Jacobs.

The vertical façade shows the form of a cruciform depression carved out of the cliff, and is divided into three registers. The bottom register is blank; the middle register imitates the front of Darius' private palace and reflects its dimensions and architectural features, apart from the windows which are omitted here, while the top register is adorned with reliefs "showing in its principal scene the king in worship above the throne, or throne-stage, which is supported by representatives of the nations of his realm" (Schmidt 1970: p. 80). The throne bearers are arranged in two tiers and identified with trilingual legends, and the three versions – Old Persian, Elamite, and Babylonian – of Darius' two inscriptions celebrate the king's achievements and the harmony of the empire.

The tomb itself, carved in the rock, is accessed from the central doorway of the palace façade, which was closed by a stone door: it consists of a vestibule parallel to the façade, with flat ceiling, and three rectangular compartments extending from the vestibule into the rock, and with a gabled ceiling which Schmidt associated with the traditional houses and Cyrus' tomb (Schmidt 1970: p. 88). In each of the compartments were three rectangular burial cists with main axis parallel to the vestibule, aligned and adjoining one another, cut into the floor of the compartments, so that the floor of the cists is at the same level as that of the vestibule (Schmidt 1970: pp. 87–88, figs 31–32, pls. 38–39), originally closed by low-gabled monolithic lids – some of them still in situ – measuring c. $2.10 \times 1.05 \times 1.05$ m. An important point to be noted concerns the dimensions of these cavities, which exceed those of bodies of average height. This may well be accounted for with the possibility that the bodies

were deposited in sarcophagi, which were then placed in the cavities (Schmidt 1970: p. 88). The description preserved in Diodorus of Sicily, which is based on the historians of Alexander, seems to confirm this interpretation:

[The royal hill] was a smooth rock hollowed out into many chambers in which were the sepulchres of the dead kings. These have no other access but receive the sarcophagi of the dead which are lifted by certain mechanical hoists. (Diodorus 17.71.7–8 after Bradford Welles)

Darius' tomb served as a model for the tombs of the subsequent Achaemenid kings, amounting to a total of seven, numbered in accordance with E.F. Schmidt's publication: Tombs I to IV at Naqsh-e Rostam, Tombs V to VII at Persepolis.

The burial cists vary in number in each tomb according to the number that could find room for burial in the king's tomb, and each of the tombs has a different number of inner sepulchral compartments and of burial cists in each compartment. Tomb I has three compartments with three cists each, Tomb II one compartment with three cists, Tomb III three compartments with one cist each, Tomb IV three compartments with one cist each, Tomb V three compartments with two cists each and Tomb VI one compartment with one cist, while construction of Tomb VII was never completed.

Schmidt attributes Tomb I to Darius I, Tomb II to Xerxes, Tombs III and IV only tentatively to Artaxerxes I and Darius II, Tomb V to Artaxerxes II, Tomb VI to Artaxerxes III and Tomb VII, the unfinished tomb, to Darius III (Schmidt 1970: p. 10, fn. 5). However, P. Calmeyer suggests changing the attribution of Tomb IV to Artaxerxes I, of Tomb III to Darius II and, in particular, of Tomb VII to Artaxerxes II or Sekyndianos (Calmeyer 1975: p. 111). Calmeyer's main achievement consists in final recognition, based on a detailed stylistic study of the finished reliefs, of the fact the Tomb VII was the first of Persepolis' tombs, and was therefore left unfinished not because of the death of Darius III but because during the work the rock shattered (Kleiss and Calmeyer 1975). The execution of Tombs V and VI in the mountain overhanging the Persepolis Terrace marks the transformation of that complex into a place for celebration of the dead kings.

As the detailed study of the available sources has shown, despite the marked difference in the tomb architectural typologies, the burial customs which the Pasargadae and Naqsh-e Rostam tombs show are the same, i.e. burial of the whole – probably embalmed – body in a coffin inside a chamber, while the change from a gabled hut to a rock-cut tomb should not be understood as corresponding to a change in religion (Jacobs 2010: pp. 99–100).

Continuity in rituals during the Achaemenid period is also suggested by the structures existing in the area in front of the two Persepolis North and South

Tombs, which were brought to light with excavations. The two stone offering basins found inside and near the Southern Tomb are likely to be not so much proof of religious ceremonies as installations attesting to the performance of offerings for the deceased kings, as already mentioned for Cyrus' tomb and subsequently evidenced by Shapur I's inscriptions at the Ka'be-ye Zardosht of Nasqh-e Rostam.

The interpretation of the rock-cut monument of Qadamgah in central Fars as the unfinished tomb of an aristocratic family of the end of the Achaemenid period begun in imitation of the Persepolis models has been belied by a recent investigation of the monument, which has shown that it represents a finished ceremonial terrace hewn from the rock of the mountain and completed with stone insets, the removal of which has given it today's unfinished aspect (Bessac 2007).

A funerary function has also been proposed for the two "towers" of Pasargadae and Naqsh-e Rostam, but the evidence as a whole points to a different use. The theory was formulated mainly on the basis of the Ka'be-ye Zardosht of Naqsh-e Rostam, which is much better preserved than the Zendan-e Solayman of Pasargadae and rises in isolation facing the rock-cut royal tombs. The few suggestions advanced on its use as a tomb do not stand up to the observations of H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg, who suggested an alternative and more grounded functional interpretation as a religious building used for ceremonies linked to the initiatic investiture of the king by his ancestors (Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1983). We could also conjecture that this building was linked to the function of the tomb keeper, such as Bagapates, who according to Ctesias was "for seven years the keeper of the tomb of Darius" (Ctesias, F. 13, 23). Besides, for the Pasargadae tower, the Iranian-French geophysical investigations which proved the inclusion of the monument within a larger architectural complex show that the monument was not isolated, as all our written sources on Cyrus' tomb confirm, so the suggestion of its alternative identification as Cyrus' tomb based on some of these sources (Jacobs 2010: pp. 91–92) is not tenable.

As mentioned above, rock-cut monumental tombs are located in the region of Media (Qyzqapan, Dukkan-e Da'ud, Fakhriqâ), which E. Herzfeld and other scholars had attributed to a pre-Achaemenid age and interpreted as the model for Darius' tomb. In fact, the compositional scheme recalls the tombs of Darius and his successors, with a palace façade and a ritual scene including a fire-altar, but several architectural features point to dating to the fourth or third century BCE. Attributed to the same time span is the rock-cut tomb at Dâ u Dokhtar, in western Fars, with four engaged columns surmounted by Ionic capitals and a prominent battlemented cornice (Stronach 1978: p. 304; Callieri 2007: pp. 97–98). The site of Akhor-e Rostam, not far from Persepolis, shows installations of various shapes and dimensions: along with larger

rock-cut cavities which are likely to be tombs, there are smaller cavities probably representing *astodâns*, but also remains of stone coffins and of graves cut into the soil at the foot of the rock. One of the tombs has a rock-cut façade with decorative features imitating Achaemenid architecture in a poor, schematic way, which has suggested dating to the post-Achaemenid period, extended to the whole site (Huff 1988: p. 155; Boucharlat 2006: p. 454). None of the many rock-cut *astodân* of Fars can be safely dated to the Achaemenid period, even though the word *astodân* appears in an Aramaic inscription on the fourth century Lycian rock-cut tomb of Limyra (Huff 1988: p. 150).

In the Zoroastrian texts, and in particular in those parts of *Avesta* which are commonly dated to the second half of the first millennium BCE, we find the prescription for a peculiar funerary custom which aims at eliminating the pollution of natural elements by decomposing flesh through exposure in high places where carnivorous birds should deflesh the bones (*Vidēvdāt*, 6.44–51). The bones deprived of decomposing flesh should then be collected and preserved (*Vidēvdāt*, 6.9–50) in a receptacle set in a place inaccessible to wild animals and rain, such as the *astodân* (i.e. ‘bones container’), belonging to different types but rarely of monumental appearance. Moreover, exposure of the dead body would allow it to be reached by the sunbeams (*Vidēvdāt*, 5.13) at the dawn of the fourth day after death, when the soul of the deceased could go to the other world (*Vidēvdāt*, 19.28).

Indeed, we can conjecture from the Zoroastrian texts that inhumation was commonly practiced because, while incineration calls for capital punishment (*Vidēvdāt*, 8.73–74), the Mazdean Law pardons inhumation (*Vidēvdāt*, 3.41) in an evident effort to balance the new custom with the old traditions.

The classical sources agree with the Zoroastrian texts. The custom of defleshing is mentioned by Herodotus as early as the Achaemenid period:

But there are other matters concerning the dead which are secretly and obscurely told – how the dead bodies of Persians are not buried before they have been mangled (*helkysthēi*) by bird or dog. That this is the way of the Magians I know for a certainty, for they do not conceal the practice. But this is certain, that before the Persians bury the body in earth they embalm it in wax (*katakērō santes*). (Herodotus 1.140 after Godley)

It is worth noting that according to the Greek historian defleshing is definitely the custom of the Magi, who openly practice it; as for the rest of the population, Herodotus mentions the Persian practice of burying a dead body after having coated it with wax. A similar state of affairs is reported in the first century BCE to the first century CE by Strabo (15.3.20), who relates that

only the Magi, a priestly tribe or caste, exposed their dead bodies, whereas the other Persians buried them after having coated them with wax:

They smear bodies of the dead with wax (*kērōi periplásantes*) before they bury them, though they do not bury the Magi but leave their bodies to be eaten by birds (*oiōnobrôtous*). (Strabo 15.3.20 after Jones)

Again, Herodotus (3.16), Ctesias (F. 16.62), and Strabo (15.3.18) inform us of the ban on incineration, which is also confirmed by the absence of archeological traces of its use.

On the basis of the archeological evidence, the custom of exposure and defleshing does not seem to have become widespread in Iran before the Sasanian period, and all the archeological documents refer to inhumation and burial in rock-cut graves, thus confirming the observations in the classical sources on its limitation to the priestly class or tribe of the Magi. This custom seems to have spread only in the Sasanian period (*contra*, see Shahbazi 1987), while inhumation, the usual burial practice of Iron Age I–III, continued to be used in Iron Age IV; embalming was reserved to kings.

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CHAPTER 88

Religions in the Empire

Manfred Hutter

The “Political” Zoroastrianism of the Achaemenid Rulers

The question of whether the Achaemenids were Zoroastrians was strongly disputed in earlier research. But in recent times the opinion gained ground that the religious practices and concepts which we know from the Old Persian inscriptions of the Achaemenid rulers can be correlated with the Zoroastrian traditions we know from the Avesta. Of course, due to the literary genre of the Old Persian inscriptions and the hymnic and ritualistic genre of the Avestan texts, our available written sources show some differences, but they do not contradict each other. Therefore this chapter is based on the hypothesis that the Achaemenid rulers practiced a kind of religion which can be labeled as Zoroastrian. Arguments for this scholarly opinion can be taken from the terminology engaged in the Old Persian inscriptions. Within the political context, Darius in his famous Behistun inscriptions referred to the dualism between truth (Old Persian: *arta*, Avestan: *aša*) and lie (Old Persian: *drauga*, Avestan: *drug*, *druj*): Gaumata and the others who revolted against Darius are followers of “Lie” (DB I 34, DB IV 34–8, cf. also DNb 12). In an inscription from Persepolis, Darius expressed his wish that Auramazda – I prefer the Old Persian spelling of the god’s name throughout this chapter, also when “normalizing” Elamite spellings of the god – should protect his country from a (hostile) army, from famine, and from lie. All these words also refer to a strict

dualism. The Old Persian word *hainā*, “army,” corresponds to Avestan *haēnā*, the army of the demons (Yt 10:8, 19:54), and also “famine” (Old Persian *dušiyāra*) has its equivalence in the Avestan word *dužya’riia* (cf. Yt 8:50–56). But we also find terminology with positive semantics in these inscriptions; therefore Xerxes expresses in one inscription from Persepolis (XPh 46–56) that he might be happy while living and blessed in the hereafter. The Old Persian word *artavan*, meaning “blessed,” corresponds to Avestan *ašauuan*. Both words are derived from the nouns *arta-* and *aša-* respectively, meaning “truth” as opposed to “lie.” That the Achaemenids programmatically stick to “truth” can be seen from the royal name Artaxerxes (Old Persian *artaxšaça*), meaning “the one whose reign is based on truth.” Such terminology in the Old Persian inscriptions corresponding to key terms in the Avesta shows beyond doubt that the Achaemenid rulers are well versed in the tenets of Zoroastrianism; but their inscriptions also make it clear that Zoroastrian dualism between truth and lie fits excellently for a “political” use of Zoroastrianism by the rulers to characterize their political fiends as enemies of religion.

Going one step further, one also can easily see that the Achaemenids did not follow a monotheistic interpretation of the religion which originated with Zarathustra. This becomes evident from several passages in the Old Persian text which mentions Auramazda as the “greatest of the gods” (e.g. DPd 1–2, DPh 9, AsH 6–, XE 2, A²Hc 2), and other texts refer to the “gods (of the royal house)” besides Auramazda (DPd 14–15, 22, XPb 28–29, XPc 12–13, A¹Pa 23). Also the administrative tablets found in Persepolis mention Auramazda and “all the gods” (Mišebaka = *Visaibagā) side by side (cf. Koch 2011: pp. 115–118; Henkelman 2008: p. 325 with fn. 755, 528). So we see that Auramazda was considered the highest god under the Achaemenids, but never the only god (Kuhrt 2007: p. 122). Therefore it is not problematic that starting with Artaxerxes II also Anahita and Mithra are mentioned in the royal inscriptions side by side with Auramazda. From these three gods Artaxerxes hopes to get protection (A²Sa 5, A²Sc 3–4). From the information given in the Old Persian inscription we first have to conclude that during the period of the Achaemenids we find references not only to Auramazda but also to “other” gods. In some cases like Anahita, the political situation of the Achaemenid Empire has even led to mutual religious influences of different goddesses (the Avestan Aredvi Surā Anahita, the Babylonian Ishtar, the late Babylonian Nanaia) who are responsible for a “composite” character of Anahita as main goddess, maybe even including elements from further goddesses – such as Artemis or Meter Kybele – in the western parts of the empire (Stausberg 2002: pp. 175–176; cf. also Kuhrt 2007: p. 123). In this way the Achaemenids’ Zoroastrianism is not identical with the religion we can reconstruct from the texts of the (Younger) Avesta, but it shares with the Avestan tradition the position of Auramazda as head of a pluralistic Iranian pantheon and a

“dualistic” worldview based on the opposition of truth and lie. Basing themselves on these teachings, the Achaemenids made use of the teachings for political purposes also.

This leads to the question of “tolerance” of the Achaemenids toward other religions. Starting from the biblical reference in the Book of Isaiah (45:1) with Cyrus as “anointed messiah” and Cyrus’ edict to repatriate the exiled Jewish population in Babylon to Judah after his conquest of Babylon (Ezra 1:1–11), it has often been said that the Achaemenids – in contrast to the Assyrians and the Babylonians – showed great tolerance toward the religions practiced by the different people in the empire. But there are good reasons to question this assumption. One argument – at least related to the Achaemenids’ “tolerance” to the biblical religion – was the idea that the Achaemenids practiced their moral monotheistic Zoroastrianism which was seen as structurally parallel to the religion in Israel, and therefore the latter was tolerated. This argument is no longer sound when one takes into account the pluralistic and “polytheistic” character of Zoroastrianism (cf. also Ahn 2002: p. 196; Kuhrt 2007: p. 118). The other objection against the aforesaid assumption is based on a theoretical level (Stausberg 2002: pp. 162–163; further Ahn 2002: pp. 199–200): “tolerance” or “intolerance” rely largely on the “missionary” idea of a religious tradition, which includes a program of spreading the religion as a means of “salvation” to everybody. We can neither prove such a “missionary” idea for Zoroastrianism as documented in the Avesta nor for the Achaemenids’ religion which we can only reconstruct from the Old Persian texts. The latter texts teach us only how the Achaemenids made use of religion(s) in the political situation; this could also lead to actions which were harmful to the religious background of a community; but the reason why the Achaemenids acted in such a harmful way for a religion was never the religious belief itself but a political “disloyalty” of the given community (cf. also DB V 14–17). Therefore speaking of Achaemenid “tolerance” or “intolerance” against other religions in the empire is a misnomer.

The thesis that actions which proved harmful for a religious situation are deeply rooted in politics (and not in theology or a belief system) can be well explained by taking a closer look at the so-called “Daiva inscription” of Xerxes (486–465 BCE). This inscription from Persepolis says (XPh 28–41, cited – with minor orthographic variations – from Harvey et al. 2012):

(§ 4a) Xerxes the King declares: Since the time that I have become king, there is among those lands inscribed above one that was rising up. And thereupon, Auramazda bore me aid. By the will of Auramazda I struck that country down and I now put it down in its place.

(§ 4b) And among these lands there was one where the *daivas* were once worshipped; but later, by the will of Auramazda, I uprooted that altar to the daivas,

and proclaimed: “The *daivas* shall not be worshipped!” Then, being reverent, I worshipped Auramazda and *arta* (“truth”) where the *daivas* were worshipped once before.

This inscription often plays a central role in determining the extension of the “(in)tolerance” of the Achaemenids. Who were the *daivas* mentioned in the inscription? What was the concrete historical background of Xerxes’ action against them? Mainly the scholarly opinion focuses on three positions (cf. the literature given e.g. by Ahn 1992: pp. 111–122; Herrenschmidt and Kellens 1993: pp. 600–601; Ahn 2002: p. 199): the destruction of the Marduk temple in Babylon, the destruction of the Acropolis as temple of Athena in Athens, or the destruction of a temple of non-Zoroastrian Iranian gods. During the first years of Xerxes’ reign there were several uproars in the empire, and in 482 and 479 BCE the Persians could subdue unrest in Babylon. In the course of Xerxes’ campaign in 479 BCE the Marduk temple was affected. The Greek author Herodotus (Hist. 1.183) mentioned that the statue of “Zeus” had been deported by Xerxes, but we cannot take for granted that it refers to the main statue of Marduk in the Esagila temple (cf. also Wiesehöfer 1994: p. 77; Heller 2010: pp. 295–297). So despite Herodotus’ notice we cannot say that the *daiva* inscription refers to Xerxes’ actions in Babylon. The same is true for an interpretation which connects the *daiva* inscription with the Persian campaigns to Greece in 480/479 BCE. Even though sometimes it is argued that the mention of the “Yauna (Ionians) who dwell by the sea across the sea” (XPh 23–25) shows that the inscription refers to the Greece campaign, one has to challenge this opinion: one reason is that already Darius mentions these Yauna (DSe 27–29, DPe 12–15), and the other is that the Yauna are people living on the Ionian coast in western Anatolia and on Aegean islands, but not in the Greek mainland. So the inscription cannot support the assumption that Xerxes considered the Acropolis a place of *daivas*; if Xerxes had considered the religious practices in Athens against his own religious tradition, he would never have allowed Athenians to start offering to the goddess Athena again one day after the destruction of the Acropolis (cf. Wiesehöfer 1994: p. 88). Neither in Babylon nor in Athens had Zoroastrian religious practices been introduced, so we cannot reconcile the inscriptions’ note that Xerxes reestablished the worship of Auramazda at the place where previously *daivas* had been worshipped (XPh 39–41). As this was not the case in Babylon and Athens, some scholars try to interpret the *daivas* as non-Zoroastrian Iranian gods. This interpretation is based on the hypothesis that Zoroastrianism is a strictly and exclusively monotheistic religion, and therefore the worship of other Iranian gods seemed unacceptable for Xerxes’ religious zeal. But as mentioned above, the Old Persian inscriptions – and the Avesta as well – do not focus on a monotheistic god Auramazda, so it is highly unlikely that one

can hold up such an interpretation. If that had been the case, it also would be rather strange that this document by Xerxes is the only document which mentions the *daivas*. We have to look for alternatives outside the discussion of “religious” tolerance or intolerance. Going back to § 4a, we find the solution: Xerxes starts his description by referring to one country which rebelled at the beginning of his kingship. This rebellion was crushed down by Xerxes according to Auramazda’s will. Looking to the next paragraph, we read in a widely parallel structure that one country worshipped “*daivas*,” and according to Auramazda’s will Xerxes also stopped this “*daivic* worship.” Taking into account the largely parallel structure of both paragraphs we have to conclude that Xerxes does not say anything about his theological conviction about other gods, but the revolt of any country against Xerxes’ reign is against the will of Auramazda. If a rebellious country worships gods who back such a rebellion against the Achaemenid reign and Auramazda’s will, these gods are *daivas*, opposing Auramazda and the (political) truth. Therefore, the *daiva* inscription – as long as further new sources referring exactly to this inscription with historical details are not available – can only be taken as a political document that says that rebellion against the king is against Auramazda’s will. But it does not say anything about religious tolerance or intolerance of the Achaemenids. As long as the worship of Zoroastrian or non-Zoroastrian gods by the various peoples in the Achaemenid Empire does not oppose the political rule of Xerxes (and other Achaemenid kings), the religions of the empire can be practiced without restrictions by the king who would have been motivated by the Achaemenids’ Zoroastrianism.

The Achaemenids and the Religions of the Empire

The religious policy focuses on two aspects. First, the local gods of the various ethnic groups within the empire can play a supporting role for the maintenance of the political order, therefore the kings fostered local cults by financial aid and offerings – just to mention as examples: Darius presented himself in the traditional role of the pharaoh, and Athenians who joined Xerxes after his destruction of the Acropolis could immediately sacrifice to the Greek gods again. Thus local religious practices found no restriction and were even encouraged for the benefit of the empire. The second aspect – depending on the “non-missionary” character of the Achaemenids’ Zoroastrianism – is connected with the idea that the Achaemenids were also aware that Auramazda as “Iranian” god as he is characterized in the Elamite version of Darius’ Behistun inscription (DB IV 60–62; cf. Potts 1999: p. 345) was not suitable for the religious needs of the many non-Iranian people in the empire. Thus worshipping their own gods was necessary (cf. Wiesehöfer 1994: p. 91; Schaper 2000:

p. 133). The Achaemenids' political realm covered – as can be easily seen from the inscriptions – both Iranian and non-Iranian lands (DB I 14–17, DNa 22–30), so the religious pluralism within the empire cannot be overlooked. But due to our limited sources we cannot sharply reconstruct all the religious ideas which existed in all those places, therefore this chapter is limited to the Elamite traditions in the southwest of Iran, to Babylonian traditions, and to the Jewish religious situation – focusing on the question of how or if the Achaemenids interfered in the religious field of these areas. A fully systematic evaluation of the history of religions in these areas during the Achaemenid period lies beyond the scope of this chapter. Other areas like Media with baseless speculations about the Magi as the representatives of the religion of the Medes, as Handley-Schachler (1998) puts it, or as opponents of the religion of the Achaemenids (see e.g. Koch 2011: pp. 101–102) are not covered, because missing information about the religion of the Medes does not allow any sound arguments to reconstruct their religious ideas and put such a reconstruction in any well-based relation to the politics of the Achaemenids.

Elam

Elamian culture and religion started in the last centuries of the fourth millennium BCE, having periods of ups and downs, but – other than in earlier research – Elam could well recover from the Assyrians' attacks in the 640s BCE and reestablish itself as a political and cultural entity which prospered until the Achaemenid period, keeping Elamite religious traditions alive. Especially from about 30 000 administrative tablets and fragments in Elamite language found in Persepolis which can be dated between 509 and 494 BCE, we get information about the administrative situation (Potts 1999: pp. 320–325; Henkelman 2008: pp. 79–83). As fragments and incomplete tablets can be partly joined, maybe about 15 000 texts exist, 4845 of them are published, and it is estimated that about 2000 other unpublished texts might provide understandable Elamite texts. Thanks to the efforts of H. Koch, who has studied these texts continuously since 1977 and has given a summary of her findings only recently (Koch 2011: pp. 108–137), these texts have been acknowledged as important sources for Elamite religious traditions during the reign of Darius, although Koch's findings are not undisputed. The study by Henkelman (2008) critically corrects some central points of Koch's hypothetical interpretations.

The information acquired from the Persepolis tablets does not cover all of the Achaemenid Empire, but according to roughly 400 toponyms mentioned in the texts, we can attribute them to six administrative districts. Worth mentioning is that in the Persepolis district the "Iranian" gods clearly outnumber the "Elamite" gods, and in the Elymais, the Elamite gods are dominating.

Generally speaking this is not surprising, but this evidence also shows local diversity among the religions. Looking first to the gods' names, some of them can have Iranian etymologies and they – at least – partly can be connected with their counterparts from the Zoroastrian tradition. Starting with Auramazda, we can observe that he is mentioned in the Persepolis tablets in a relatively limited number, and what is also important, when Auramazda receives offerings, he is in most cases mentioned together with other gods (cf. Potts 1999: p. 346 with references; for a list of gods mentioned in the tablets cf. Henkelman 2008: p. 213). Just to mention a few examples: Turkama, a certain official, receives wine to provide offerings for Auramazda (^{AN}*u-ra-mas-da*) and Humban (^{AN}*um-ban* / ^{AN}*um-ba-in*, etc.) according to one text (Henkelman 2008: p. 523; Koch 1977: p. 29); another tablet mentions Appirka, who has wine at his disposal for offerings for the gods Auramazda, Shimut, and Mishabaka (Henkelman 2008: p. 554; cf. Koch 1977: p. 28). From other texts we learn about the provisions of barley which the *šatin*-priest Bakabana can use for the offerings for Auramazda and for the goddess Mishdushi (^{AN}*mi-iš-du-ši*) (Henkelman 2008: p. 528; Koch 1977: p. 28). Other noteworthy gods who are mentioned among these administrative tablets are Nairyosanha (^{AN}*na-ri-šá-an-ka₄*), Hvarira (^{AN}*mar-ri-ráš*), the Earth (written syllabographically as ^{AN}*KI*), and Napirisha (^{AN}*na-pír-šá-ir-ra*). But (personified) rivers and mountains are also mentioned in these tablets as divine beings. While Auramazda is well known both from the Avestan sources and from Old Persian texts, Nairyosanha and Mishdushi are gods mentioned – outside the Persepolis tablets – in the Younger Avesta. Nairyosanha is a divine messenger, and Mishdushi's name can be deduced from the Avestan word *mižda*, “reward”; most probably she can be equated with the goddess Ashi from the Avesta. Hvarira is – judging by the Iranian name – a god or genius of the Sunrise (Gershevitch 1969: pp. 173–174; but cf. Henkelman 2008: p. 325 with note 755), but this divine name is not attested in the Avesta. Therefore, despite the etymology, it is not quite certain whether he is a genuine Iranian god. However, because of his function as “genius of the Sunrise,” the middle Elamian bronze object depicting a ritual scene which was called *šit šamši* (“sunrise”) by the given Akkadian inscription on the object immediately comes to mind (Henkelman 2008: pp. 450–451; cf. for *šit šamši* also Koch 2011: p. 73). Thus while it is not impossible that Hvarira is of Iranian origin as suggested by the name, it is also possible that he is an Elamite god who secondarily had an Iranian name. For the god(dess) “Earth” we have to leave open the question of whether we have to consider “Earth” as an Iranian goddess, related to Zam, the Avestan goddess to whom a whole Yasht in the Younger Avesta is dedicated, or if she is to be considered as an Elamite chthonian goddess. Despite the sumerographic writing “KI” it can be ruled out that “Earth” mentioned in these texts is a Sumerian goddess (cf. Henkelman 2008:

p. 334). At least three of the mentioned gods are Elamite gods: Napirisha was – at least since the Middle Elamite period – a well-known Elamite god who took care of the people on earth; sometimes he is just called the “Great god” (sumerographically written DINGIR.GAL), which clearly shows his importance, which lasted until the Achaemenid period (Koch 2011: p. 61). Humban’s position in the early Elamite pantheon is even more important than that of Napirisha, who sometimes is equated with the important Mesopotamian god Enlil; although Humban can never gain the leading position of the Elamite pantheon, we can see especially during the Neo-Elamite period that many theophoric personal names refer to this god; this leads to the conclusion of Humban’s “revival” during the first half of the first millennium (cf. Koch 2011: pp. 59–60). Shimut as divine name among the Elamites has been attested from the third to the middle of the first millennium, with preferences during the Old and Neo-Elamite periods; maybe he was also the main god on whose behalf the Tuga festival in the first month of the year was celebrated (cf. Koch 2011: p. 48). The last group, the rivers and mountains, is restricted according to the tablets to the district in the west and southwest of Persepolis, an area with high mountains and big rivers. Thus we have to deal here with the veneration of local natural phenomena, which of course can be reconciled with both Elamite or Iranian religious practice. As Koch points out, classical authors also mention the veneration of mountains and waters (cf. Herodotus 1.131, Strabo, Geography 5.13.16), and the holiness of the pure waters (as well as the other elements fire and earth) is well known in Zoroastrianism. But as the tablets restrict the offerings for mountains and rivers to one area only, it is better to take these references as expressions of cultic practices which also included the powers of nature (in general), and we cannot deduce whether the veneration of the mountains and rivers was an “Iranian” or an “Elamite” religious practice. Concluding this section on the gods according to the Persepolis tablets, one cannot avoid the impression that these tablets show that at least in the administrative districts in the southwest of present-day Iran there were no strict borders or mutual exclusiveness of “Iranian” (Zoroastrian or Mazdayasnian) and Elamite religious practices.

This leads us to the so-called *lan*-sacrifice: according to Koch (1977: pp. 137–138, 2011: pp. 111–115), the *lan*-sacrifice was the main sacrifice of the official royal cult in the Persepolis district, dedicated to Auramazda. Koch’s interpretation is founded on some presumptions which cannot be proved or upheld without doubt. Koch is right in arguing that in the Persis close to Persepolis as the capital the *lan*-sacrifice is more often mentioned in the tablets in remote areas. The author argues further that the priest who is exclusively mentioned only in connection with the *lan*-sacrifice is the *haturmakša*, whom she interprets as “*ātrvaxša*,” a notion for a Zoroastrian priest in the Avesta whose title relates him to the handling of the (sacred) fire. From this

evidence Koch concludes that the *lan*-sacrifice is a ritual for Auramazda as a proof of Darius' Zoroastrianism and worship of Auramazda as the only god in the official cult of the Achaemenids. Some objections against Koch's interpretation of the *lan* as an exclusive offering for Auramazda have been raised: Handley-Schachler offers a completely opposite position to Koch, arguing that the *lan*-sacrifice is of "an exclusively Magian concern" (Handley-Schachler 1998: p. 204) and therefore it cannot be connected with Auramazda and the royal cult, because the Magi, who – according to Handley-Schachler (1998: p. 199) – were the priests of the Median religion, never worshipped Auramazda; also *haturmakša*, who in some texts is associated with a "*makuš*," is a Magi priest. But Handley-Schachler's interpretation is not sound either, as Henkelman has shown. Starting with the gods who are mentioned in the tablets in connection with the *lan*-sacrifice (cf. the list in Henkelman 2008: p. 213), it is quite obvious that gods of both Iranian or Elamite origin receive offerings during the *lan*. This rules out both interpretations of *lan* being either a Zoroastrian sacrifice for Auramazda in the state cult or a type of offering in the Median religion of the Magi, at least in the exclusive way that Koch and Handley-Schachler argue. A further argument which Henkelman (2008: p. 209) mentions against Koch's interpretation refers to the materials for the offering: sheep and goats can be offered, and not only fruits, grain, and wine as purely vegetarian offerings. Looking to the word *lan* (mostly written ^{AN}*la-an*) itself, one can derive it from the Elamite verb "*la-*" (to send), thus the word *lan* can be literally interpreted as "the sacred item [which is] sent [to the god]" or generally speaking the "offering" or "oblation"; maybe this kind of offering attested in the Persepolis tablets can also be equated with the Middle Elamite word *lam*, which also means some kind of offering. We do not know if the Middle Elamite and the Achaemenid Elamite offering had quite the same function or if the younger *lan*-offering has gone through some evolutive stages, but in any case, this makes it highly improbable that the *lan*-offering was an offering exclusively established for Auramazda in the official cult fostered by Darius (cf. Henkelman 2008: pp. 194, 257–258). As a conclusion we have to say that the *lan*-sacrifice obviously is an important part of the cultic calendar during Darius' reign, as it is offered regularly every month. As the name of the offering goes back at least to the Middle Elamite period, it is also improbable that it is of Median or Iranian-Zoroastrian origin (in that case an Iranian word would be used to name this ritual). But despite the Elamite name of the offering, one also should not attribute it to Elamites exclusively, as both the gods and the priests who are engaged in the *lan*-offering have partly an Iranian and partly an Elamite background (cf. Henkelman 2008: p. 243). Thus the *lan*-offering shows the close interconnection of these different ethnic traditions in a local religious practice mainly in the Persepolis area.

Another important sacrifice was the *kushukum* (*ku-šu-kúm*), which was celebrated in the Elymais, primarily for an Elamite goddess in connection with great festivals. This kind of offering had its origin already in the Early Elamian period when it probably was connected with a goddess, either Pinengir or Kiririsha. For the *kushukum*, various animals could be slaughtered; sometimes the Persepolis tablets mention that priests exchanged fruits or flour against animals for the sacrifice; the reason for such exchange of material needed for the offering was, according to Koch (2011: pp. 128–129), that the royal administration did not provide animals for offerings as blood sacrifices were not suitable for Darius' views about Zoroastrian religion. But such an interpretation is not necessary, as we can take exchanges like these also as a general practice related to the temple as an economic institution which made the best use of the goods available in the temple economy – this exchange of goods can simply be “normal” economic practice, not leading to too many conclusions about religious practices.

In conclusion, we can say that the Persepolis tablets provide some information about religious traditions in the empire in a pluralistic way. The royal administration provides goods for the cult and offerings as religion was a factor in the Achaemenid society, which helped to strengthen the stability of the society. Therefore the royal administration supported the offerings without distinguishing between “Iranian-Zoroastrian” or “Elamite” gods; but the Persepolis tablets do not offer evidence that the royal administration fostered and restricted a special way of offering. Therefore Koch's “very narrow definition of (Gathic) Zoroastrianism” (Henkelman 2008: p. 215) cannot be supported by the evidence from the Old Persian inscriptions or from the Persepolis tablets and thus cannot be upheld.

Mesopotamia

Looking at the religious situation in Mesopotamia we can observe that there was not any significant change in religious practices from the Neo-Babylonian time to the Achaemenid period, but we also have only limited information about active participation of the Achaemenid rulers in Babylonian religious practices. After Cyrus' victory over the Babylonians and their surrender of Babylon to the Achaemenid king, Cyrus restored – according to his inscription in the Cyrus Cylinder – the cult of Marduk again, which had been interrupted by the war. But the text itself is less a document about religious thoughts or behavior of the Achaemenids toward the Babylonians than a document that gives political legitimacy to Cyrus; the same can also be observed relating to his successors Cambyses and Darius, whose religio-political activities in Egypt focus on their acceptance as legitimate rulers by the Egyptians; thus both Cambyses' offerings for the Apis bull and Darius' erection of a

temple in Hibis in the Khargah Oasis are to be seen along political lines and therefore we cannot deduce from such actions any valid information about the kings' religious tolerance or intolerance toward other religions in the empire (cf. Kuhrt 2007: p. 125; Wiesehöfer 1994: pp. 75–76). Achaemenid rulers' specific building activities for Mesopotamian temples are not documented because a fragmentary inscription from the Eanna temple in Uruk cannot be generalized: Cyrus furthered religious activities in the Eanna, but this was – it seems – merely the result of some restorative politics after the conquest of Babylon to bring Mesopotamia back to “normal” life after the political and military unrest. Both Cyrus and later rulers were not engaged in building activities for temples (cf. Heller 2010: p. 353; Frahm 2002: pp. 76–77).

Thus direct interaction between Achaemenid kings and the religious centers and institutions in Mesopotamia is largely missing, and we can also see that there is significant ongoing continuity from the Babylonian to the Achaemenid period in the temples and the Babylonian cult (cf. Oelsner 2002: pp. 55–65; Frahm 2002: p. 77; Heller 2010: pp. 294, 353): both the administration and the economy of the temples remained unchanged and the traditional Babylonian literature was copied continuously during the Achaemenid period. Obviously the functioning of the economy of the temples in the traditional way was important and useful also for the Achaemenids. Therefore they did not interfere in these (religion-connected) institutions. Judging from this situation in general the opinion that the Achaemenids destroyed Babylonian temples such as the Eanna in Uruk, the Esagil in Babylon, or other sacred places in other cities cannot be upheld any longer (cf. Oelsner 2002: p. 65). Also the famous “Daiva inscription” by Xerxes does not refer to such activities in Babylonia.

But was there any positive interference into Babylonian religion during the Achaemenid period? Sometimes it has been argued that the veneration of Adad and KI (the “Earth”) in the Persepolis area might show an eastward spread of Babylonian religion. Although Adad's name shows his Babylonian background, it is unlikely that he was still conceived as a “Babylonian” god in the Iranian core-land. He had been venerated in that area for a long time and therefore it is probable that he had become a “local” god whose “ethnic” Babylonian was not taken into account by his worshippers any more. Also the goddess written with the Sumerogram KI does not prove the existence of a Babylonian goddess in the Iranian area; KI is just a convention of scribes, referring to a (Iranian or Elamite) goddess related to Earth (and fecundity), but not to a goddess from the Babylonian west (cf. Henkelman 2008: p. 334). Maybe the other way round we can find one example of Iranian “interference” in Babylonian religion: during the reign of Artaxerxes I and Darius II, we find a significant increase in the theophoric element Anu (the god of heaven) in the

onomasticon and also a general rise of Anu worship (at the cost of the decline of the traditional Ishtar worship in Uruk): this religious change sometimes is explained by the importance and the influence of Auramazda as Iranian god of heaven, who was favored by the Achaemenid rulers. Such an influence is possible, maybe even probable, but it is not certain in any way (Frahm 2002: pp. 99–100; cf. further Berlejung 2009: pp. 76–78, 85–86).

All this evidence leads to one conclusion: the religion in Mesopotamia lived on under the Achaemenids without any deep change or substantial influence from the Achaemenids. When we see Achaemenids rulers engaged in religious activities in Babylonia, they are not motivated by religious zeal or interest, only by political reasons.

The Province Jehud and the Jews in Elephantine

The Behistun inscription of Darius was spread over the empire in an Aramaic translation, parts of which have been found in a fragmentary state on the island of Elephantine in the south of Egypt. Besides this inscription that island – which housed a Jewish temple for Jahu and a settlement of Jewish mercenaries who lived side by side with others from foreign places, such as Babylonians, Aramaeans, Persians, or Khwaresmians (Joisten-Pruschke 2008: pp. 85–86) – provided a bulk of Aramaic papyri (Porten 1996: pp. 74–276) which shed light on the life and the religious situation of the Jewish community and their relationship to the Achaemenid Empire. But also the Hebrew Bible refers to the religio-political setting of the community in the province Jehud within the empire; the main biblical text can be found in the book of Ezra, focusing on the return of the exiled from Babylonia to the province Jehud and on the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem (Ezra 1; 3–6; cf. Hag 1:1–11). But it is a matter of debate how important the province Jehud and the Jewish community in Elephantine were in the general context of Achaemenid religious politics as the province Jehud was relatively small and also situated at the margins of the empire (cf. also Kuhrt 2007: p. 119).

Both areas – Elephantine and Jehud – can be treated separately, and the sources from Elephantine are even more important than the biblical source. Anke Joisten-Pruschke (2008) studied these materials in a decisive way. After the conquest of Egypt by Cambyzes in 525 BCE, Egypt remained under Achaemenid domination for more than a century, so the Jewish community also came under Iranian rule. One of the Elephantine papyri mentions that while Cambyzes destroyed all Egyptian temples, he spared the temple of Jahu (Porten 1996: pp. 141–142, lines 13–15). We cannot judge with certainty whether this notice is some kind of exaggeration from the point of view of the Jewish community or if it was because the Jews – as “foreigners” – were beyond the “Egyptian” target of Cambyzes’ action. Joisten-Pruschke (2008:

p. 68) gives another reason by mentioning that the Jews were loyal to Cambyses when he came to Egypt and they did not oppose him. This might be possible, because such a situation is attested for 424 BCE when there were uproars in Egypt after the death of Artaxerxes; the Jewish community did not take part in this unrest, which led to tension between the Jews and the Egyptians, culminating in the following years: the so-called Passover letter dating from 419 BCE, the fifth year of Darius II, sheds light on these tensions (Porten 1996: pp. 125–126). The Persian king sends his warning to the Egyptians on behalf of the Jewish community, telling the Egyptian priests not to interfere in religious matters of the Jahu temple. The situation in 419 BCE did not escalate further, but we see that on a political level there existed frictions, maybe partly because the Jahu temple and the Khnum temple in Elephantine were close to each other. Such tensions even grew tighter in political contexts, as we see several years later. In 410 BCE, new unrest against the Achaemenid rule and the Achaemenid governor Arshama occurred; again the Jewish community refrained from supporting this unrest (Kuhrt 2007: p. 129; Joisten-Pruschke 2008: p. 67). We know from some papyri that the Jahu temple then was destroyed by Egyptians (cf. Porten 1996: pp. 135–151): the Jewish community reports this situation to the priests in Jerusalem and to the Arshama as well, mentioning that the priests of the Khnum temple were the driving force behind the destruction of the Jahu temple. Even if there is no detailed reason given as to why the priests of the Egyptian god Khnum acted in this way to cause the destruction, it may not be too far-fetched to connect it with the Jews' loyalty to the Achaemenid governor. At the end of this incident we see that the Jewish community was allowed to rebuild the Jahu temple for its cultic needs. Judging from these actions we can deduce that the religious activities by the Jewish community came within the scope of the Achaemenid administration only when some political activity was connected with them. As we see, the Jews' loyalty to the empire (in contrast to Egypt unrest) led to a favorable position for Arshama in the community, not as a token of tolerance in general but because of the political "correctness" toward the empire.

One incident deserves further comment: as Joisten-Pruschke (2008: pp. 69–70) has pointed out, the Jews were allowed to rebuild their temple and rearrange the cult with burning incense as offering and they also could make meal-offerings, but they were not allowed to sacrifice animals as burnt offerings. Taking into account Koch's position, that the Zoroastrians did not accept animals being slaughtered for sacrifice, one could argue that this was the reason for forbidding also the burnt offerings at the Jahu temple. But as one can see, the sacrifice of animals was not prohibited in the Achaemenid Empire, as the tablets from Persepolis show for various gods. Therefore one has to look for an alternative explanation for the ban of animals being burnt

as offerings in the Jewish cult. Joisten-Pruschke's explanation seems quite convincing (2008: p. 71): burning animals as an offering is contradictory to the Zoroastrian concept of purity, avoiding any pollution of the sacred fire as symbol and representative of Auramazda. Any burnt offering harms the sacredness of fire and therefore was impossible for a Zoroastrian to accept, even if it was presented as a cultic practice in another religion. Therefore a petition of Elephantine Jews to an Achaemenid official (probably to Arshama) mentions only the offering of incense, meal- and drink-offerings, but no burnt offerings with sheep, oxen, or goats (Porten 1996: p. 151, lines 10–12). Another papyrus (Porten 1996: p. 127, line 6) avoids the mentioning of burnt offerings, as the Achaemenid official's religion is based in Zoroastrianism. Such references shed some light on religious practices which are restricted as they are not reconcilable with the Zoroastrian background of the responsible Achaemenid official. But we also should bear in mind that this does not allow us to draw a general conclusion about Achaemenid "intolerance" against other religions: the Aramaic text only seems to present the position of the Achaemenid official, not a general line of Achaemenid religious politics regarding burnt offerings. If this had been the case, also the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem as reflected in the Hebrew Bible would have been affected. But from Ezra 6:17 we learn that for the consecration of the temple, bulls, sheep, and goats had been slaughtered and sacrificed.

Turning to Jehud (and the description given in the Hebrew Bible), we also do not find much evidence for direct interference of the Achaemenids in the religious situation in the province (cf. Ackroyd 1984). But as Jehud was part of the Achaemenid Empire, we clearly find traces of influences of Zoroastrian religious thought. These influences did not result from any religious politics of the Achaemenids which would demand (in a "missionary" way) that the people of Jehud had to practice Zoroastrian cultic ceremonies. When we find such "Zoroastrian" elements in the Hebrew Bible it is only the result of cross-cultural contacts. Worth mentioning is mainly the reference to Yahweh as the "god of heaven." This "new" title possibly results from efforts to express some similarity between Yahweh (as "god of heaven") and Auramazda's heavenly features. But the new title also had the advantage of giving the "national god" Yahweh universal aspects which were well suited to Jehud's (political) position within an international empire, and the "god of heaven" could also build an excellent common bond between all Jews living dispersed in different parts of this empire (cf. Berlejung 2009: pp. 94–95). So even if this new title for Yahweh was motivated by the political situation in the Achaemenid Empire, it must be stressed that this change was not a result of the Achaemenids' religious politics but was a politically inspired religious change fostered by Jewish theologians. Another topic where the political and cultural integration of Jehud left some traces in the Hebrew Bible is Jewish thoughts about angels

and demons; these are only scarcely mentioned in earlier periods but they start to become prominent after the return from exile, so it is highly tempting to connect this development of religious thought in Jehud with the province's setting in an Iranian political and thus also cultural background. Another aspect of acceptance of "Iranian" culture can be observed because there are a number of Iranian personal names borne by persons in Jehud according to the biblical sources (cf. Hutter 2015).

So the situation in both Elephantine and the province of Jehud shows that the religion of the Jewish population was largely left unrestricted by any kind of religious politics on the part of the Achaemenids. Regarding the case of restriction of burnt offerings in Elephantine, one can also relate them to personal interests of a Zoroastrian official, which should not be generalized for a concept of "intolerance." Achaemenid interference – in Elephantine – only had the politically motivated intent to avoid tension between Egyptian Khnum priests and Hebrew priests, but this interference was motivated by political interest, not by theological preferences.

Conclusion

Looking back to the political situation during the Achaemenid period in Elam, Mesopotamia, and the Jewish community in Elephantine and the province Jehud, as illustrated in the above overview, one can reach the following conclusion regarding the Achaemenids' stance toward other religions in the empire. Bearing in mind Potts' (1999: p. 346) position that the Achaemenids were "eminently pragmatic rulers," we can deduce that religion was simply a suitable means to further the political process. That means that the Achaemenids can be labeled neither as "tolerant" nor as "intolerant," but their religious politics were based on "religious acqui-distance" to the religions in the empire. As long as the local communities accepted the political rule of the Achaemenids, there was no interference in local religious practices. Where we find the propagation of "Zoroastrian cult" outside the Iranian core lands, this occurred only for political reasons.

When Kuhrt (2007: p. 123) says that loyalty to the Achaemenian kings is reflected in the acceptance of Auramazda as the main Iranian god, this does not mean that all people in the empire had to venerate Auramazda, but his acceptance in the various parts of the empire was a significant symbol of political, not theological, acceptance. In light of this we can interpret several "Zoroastrian" traces in western Anatolia (cf. Boyce et al. 1991: pp. 200–209; Wiesehöfer 1994: p. 32): already during the reign of Darius a relief from Daskyleion in western Anatolia shows two priests, most probably Magi, who are holding barsom-twig in a fire consecrating ceremony; a

similar relief is known from Bünyan. Other sources from Anatolia are a temple dedicated to Anahita in Lydia, located about 30 km to the north-west of Sardis and the so-called Gadatas letter; in this letter Darius I blames the satrap Gadatas for not caring for the royal edict regarding the Greek gods and the Apollo temple in Magnesia on the Meandros (cf. Ahn 2002: p. 192). A further document related to Sardis tells us that the satrap Droaphernes erects a statue of Auramazda as “Zeus Baradates,” that is for “Zeus the Law-giver,” during the thirty-ninth year of Artaxerxes (Kuhrt 2007: p. 134). Such references from Asia Minor – as well as the information given above for Elam, Mesopotamia, and Jehud – are generally in line with information found in Herodotus (1.135) mentioning that the Persians tolerated foreign customs and practices. But if we look closer at any of these documentations, we can explain all of them easily within a political framework displaying political power of the Achaemenid ruler and not displaying a religious tolerance for theological or “inter-religious” reasons. The reliefs in Daskyleion and Bünyan demonstrate a cult related to Zoroastrian practices, and can well be seen in line with the Zoroastrian tenets in the Old Persian inscriptions, meaning that these reliefs mainly offer information on displaying a (political) state cult also outside the core areas of the empire to strengthen the political power and legitimacy of the rulers. Both the Gadatas letter and the statue of Zeus Baradates are motivated by using religion to uphold the Persian “law,” guaranteed by Zeus (Auramazda). What is evident from these examples from Asia Minor also holds true for the situation in other provinces, as we have seen above: they do not provide evidence for religious tolerance, but “other religions” could be practiced in an unhindered way, as long as local religious practice did not disturb political harmony in the empire or question the stability of the Achaemenids’ political rule. The “expatriate” gods – either in Persepolis or in the province Persis in general where, for example, Lycians, Lydians, Ionians, Babylonians, and Egyptians lived in a “dazzling cosmopolitan hotchpotch” (Henkelman 2008: p. 341) and participated also in local Elamite or Iranian (Zoroastrian) religious practices, as well as in the provinces of the multiethnic Achaemenid Empire – were accepted by the Achaemenid authorities, as the worship of these “foreign” gods always was deemed a private matter by the Achaemenids. In an *aequi-distance* to all non-Iranian gods, they were generally neglected by the Achaemenid administration and politics, which is neither a kind of tolerance nor intolerance. It was just a political behavior, which only then turned to political suppression of Iranian or non-Iranian gods when religion was misused by any group for political unrest and instability in the empire. Then – as Xerxes said (cf. XPh 28–41) – the *daivas* were not allowed to be worshipped anymore because those countries or groups who caused uproar were struck down by the will of Auramazda.

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SECTION X

**“GEISTESGESCHICHTE”,
SCIENCE, AND TECHNOLOGY**

CHAPTER 89

Schools, Erudition, and Wisdom

Łukasz Niesiołowski-Spanò

Education, the school system, and the whole process of knowledge transmission in the Achaemenid state may be reconstructed only on the basis of very scarce sources. To some extent, reconstruction is therefore dependent on highly circumstantial argument. In so large and diverse a country, it is certain that everything belonging to the sphere of education and intellectual life must have been heterogeneous. The differences were caused, among other reasons, by local traditions and variations in the connection between education systems and script.

All education and knowledge transmission must be seen as diverse and multifiform due to historical factors, scribal traditions, and techniques, as well as the role of script as the medium in knowledge transmission processes. However, although script is integral to education, the writing system is, obviously, not the only vehicle of knowledge transmission. It is the oral transmission of knowledge that plays a key role in many traditional societies. However, as the oral tradition has left no traces in material sources its use can only be assumed and it is not possible to be reconstructed. This means that in what follows, part is based on written sources and part based on historical speculations, thus allowing for a coherent reconstruction.

Descriptions of the education systems in so large a state as the Achaemenid Persian Empire, which flourished for over two centuries, in no way suggest a uniform and unchanging picture. To make the picture of education and knowledge transmission systems clearer, the chapter is divided into two main parts: (i) knowledge transmitted orally, and (ii) transmission based on script(s).

Oral Education and Knowledge Transmission

Herodotus, when describing the education of young Persians, claims that it was limited to: “horsemanship, archery, and telling the truth” (Hdt. 1.136.2). Obviously, none of these elements of education required script as the medium, or even a knowledge of writing. If Herodotus’ remark faithfully describes the Persian reality, one is given the impression that Persian education did not need script at all.

The Persians described by Herodotus were undoubtedly members of the upper classes of the Achaemenid society. Horse riding and archery seem to have fulfilled the main requirements of the noble ethos of the Persians. It may have been different only in the highest group of Persian elite, namely the king’s family and his relatives, from whom satraps were recruited. Even if some differences in lifestyle, due to economic status, of the elite – namely the relatives of the king and those courtiers around him – and the rest of the society may be assumed, the education system seems not to vary a lot. The education of the highest parts of the Persian elite, probably, reflected the all-Persian form and ideas.

It may not be excluded that when Herodotus mentions three aspects of Persian education, he deliberately puts forward a simplistic view. It could be too that the three-point Persian education does not reflect the real education system, but is based on the main qualities shared by all Persians, at least in Herodotus’ view. One may suppose that the broad education system included other elements of military training, with sword and spear fights, as well as hunting (cf. Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, 1.6.26–46). Archery, obviously, distinguished the elite troops from the common soldiers under Achaemenid command. Similarly, horse riding was associated with the well-born members of the elite.

It is far more difficult to understand why Herodotus mentioned truth-telling. It is of course possible that he intended it as shorthand for a general moral education. It may also be the case that he was referring to a kind of indoctrination to which young Persians were subjected. Truth-telling, as referred to by Herodotus, may be understood as a sort of promoted worldview, which was presented to pupils as the official ideology of Achaemenid Persia. Thanks to the inculcation of obedience and loyalty in young Persians, the new group of faithful leadership was formed. One may note that such education, described by Herodotus, fulfilling the needs of the upper classes, was devoid of any skills in reading and writing.

The above statement by Herodotus says explicitly that education was intended only for boys, from 5 to 20 years old. Similarly, Plato, or Pseudo-Plato, writes concerning the education of aristocratic Persian boys: “When the boys are seven years old they are given horses and have riding lessons, and

they begin to follow the chase” (*Alcibiades* I, 121e). Also in Plato, one finds a reference regarding very young children, when education started:

“after that comes the nurture of the child, not at the hands of a woman-nurse of little worth, but of the most highly approved eunuchs in the king’s service, who are charged with the whole tendence of the new-born child, and especially with the business of making him as handsome as possible by moulding his limbs into a correct shape; and while doing this they are in high honour” (*Alcibiades* I, 121d; transl. W.R.M. Lamb).

Obviously, this was the age when boys received an education in all its aspects. We have no information regarding the formal place or any school-like institution where boys were trained. Most likely teaching took place within the family; hence a father’s natural role was to educate his sons in all aspects of knowledge and teach the skills needed by an adult. Analogously, there were mothers to instruct and acquaint their daughters with the duties of adult women.

The issue of the age suitable for boys’ education appears in the speech of Cambyses by Xenophon. The writer states that boys should be taught solely rightful actions; only when they are older can some deceitful and wicked practices for use against enemies be introduced to them. This same aspect of age returns in the context of sex education:

“In the same way we do not discuss sexual matters in the presence of very young boys, lest in case lax discipline should give a free rein to their passions the young might indulge them to excess” (Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, 1.6.34; transl. W. Miller)

Unfortunately, we do not know anything about other aspects of education, even among the elite. There is no direct source allowing us to reconstruct the process of instruction in religious beliefs, rules of family life, court ceremonials, and so forth. One may so deduce that young Persians acquired this knowledge incidentally, and not during special training or in particular institutions. Xenophon states in *Cyropaedia* that young noble Persians remained in court, and were educated there, until the age of 16 or 17.

Young members of the elite started their religious education – at court – only at the age of 14:

“And when the boy reaches fourteen years he is taken over by the royal tutors, as they call them there: these are four men chosen as the most highly esteemed among the Persians of mature age, namely, the wisest one, the justest one, the most temperate one, and the bravest one. The first of these teaches him the magian lore of Zoroaster, son of Horomazes; and that is the worship of the gods: he teaches him also what pertains to a king. The justest teaches him to

be truthful all his life long; the most temperate, not to be mastered by even a single pleasure, in order that he may be accustomed to be a free man and a veritable king, who is the master first of all that is in him, not the slave; while the bravest trains him to be fearless and undaunted, telling him that to be daunted is to be enslaved” (Plato, *Alcibiades I*, 121e–122a, transl. W.R.M. Lamb)

Education unconnected with intellectual knowledge, like skills in military, rhetoric, craft, and social habits, need only be briefly touched on here. This aspect of training was obviously highly variable. The differences resulted from differences in teaching boys and girls, as well as from their social and economic status, and were not the same in Persia, Babylon, and Egypt. However, a few common elements in training in craft may be deduced: for example, it was based on a system of master to apprentice transmission. Despite many local particularities this basic form might have been universal.

Obviously, knowledge transferred orally would have included the Persian religious heritage, including the early states of Avesta. The members of the religious elite – *magi*, the king’s officials responsible for the cult – dominated this particular sphere.

As script was so marginal in Persian education processes, one may posit that Persian erudition and wisdom were transmitted orally.

Education and Script

Modern observers may find it paradoxical that so impressive and large a culture as that of the Persians did not create an elaborate literature in its native language. The Persian Empire under the Achaemenids flourished for more than 200 years without a literature in the Persian native language, which would be a cultural tool and at the same time the fruit of cultural development. Part of the Persian heritage was transmitted orally; another part was produced and kept in other languages. The use of foreign languages as the vehicle for literature and administration was not an uncommon phenomenon, nevertheless this particular aspect of culture in the Achaemenid period, including a lack of literature in Persian, attracts one’s attention.

As our sources point to the dominant role played by Elamite and Aramaic in administration, sources in these two languages deserve special attention (cf. Chapter 7 Elamite Sources, Chapter 9 Aramaic Sources, and Chapter 54 The Interplay of Languages and Communication).

Cuneiform Script and the Role of the Elamite

In the administrative system of Achaemenid Persia, cuneiform script played a special role in rendering the Babylonian and Elamite languages. This script, used for monumental royal inscriptions as well, was used in the administration,

as attested, e.g. by a large number of texts from two corpora from Persepolis, the so-called Persepolis Fortification Texts and Persepolis Treasury Tablets (cf. Chapter 7 Elamite Sources). The extensive usage of Elamite cuneiform by the scribes attests to the importance of this form of note-keeping in the royal administration.

Unfortunately, the education system for scribes using Elamite is hardly a well-documented phenomenon. The domination of Elamite language in administration reflects the secondary role of the Persian language. Use of cuneiform script and predominantly Elamite as the language of the administrative records attests to the unscribal aspect of native Persian culture.

Education in writing started for boys who were to become scribes at an early age, as was common in the pre-Persian traditions. The boys learned to read and write, mostly by copying texts. This particular way of scribe education is attested in the Persian period in the mention of the food ration for “‘boys’ (who) are copying texts” (Hallock 1969: no. 871; cf. no. 1137). Even if it is not clear what sorts of texts these boys copied, there is no doubt that the very act of copying was at the core of the scribal education.

The relatively small number of Elamite texts in comparison with the size of the empire, as well as the even smaller number of royal inscriptions in Old Persian, allows us to conclude that the Persian state as compared to its enormous size needed a rather limited number of Elamite cuneiform scribes.¹

While the Elamite language seems to have played an important role in the administration of native Persia, nations which were under Achaemenid rule continued their own scribal traditions. One of the best examples of such continuity is to be seen in Babylon. The scribal tradition in Babylonia continued its system of scribe education, scribal schools, note-keeping, and administrative use of Babylonian, as well as diversity of literature (cf. Chapter 8 Babylonian Sources). Similarly, Egyptian scripts, rooted in the local tradition, continued to be used for representative (hieroglyphic), administrative (demotic), and religious purposes (hieroglyphic and hieratic) (cf. Chapter 12 Egyptian Sources).

Alphabetic Script – the History of Aramaic

The use of alphabetic script seems to have been easier to handle than cuneiform, and the writing system allowed for a greater diversity of surfaces (papyri, parchment, ostraca, etc.) to be used, not just clay tablets although cuneiform writing was also used on very different materials. The Aramaic language, one of the west Semitic languages, had spread across large areas of Mesopotamia already in the Neo-Assyrian period. When the Achaemenids took over, a large number of their subjects used Aramaic as their mother tongue – especially in Syria – and as a useful tool of administration. The large number of Aramaic-speaking people within the Persian Empire, as well as the relatively easy access

to the world of scripture that it offered, thanks to a simple system of 22 alphabetic signs, influenced the rapid spread of this language and alphabetic script in the Achaemenid Persian Empire (cf. Chapter 9 Aramaic Sources).

One may suppose that analogously to cuneiform scribal education, the teaching of alphabetic script was based on copying texts. Presumably such is the case with the alphabetic text on an ostrakon, from fourth-century BCE Palestine, where a few names, all known from the biblical tradition, are listed (Naveh 1992: no. 8). Such writing education might have included one of the most important skills of the scribe, namely writing from dictation.

Aramaic texts from Egypt point to the fact that this language was suitable for administration and official purposes, but was attractive for other needs as well. Letters, bills, and legal documents, as well as propagandistic literature (as the content of the royal inscription from Bisitun), circulated in Aramaic. This suggests that Aramaic was widely used by scribes, but also widely spoken by the people in the country. The most striking evidence is the Aramaic version of the Bisitun inscription found in Egypt (Cowley 1923: pp. 248–271; Porten and Yardeni 1986–1999: Vol. 3, C2.1). Furthermore, the original text contains a phrase about the translation of the text and its sending over “to the lands”:

“Darius the king proclaims: By the favour of Auramazda, this (is) the form of writing, which I have made, besides in Aryan. Both on clay tablets and on parchment it has been placed. Beside, I also made the signature (?); beside, I also made the lineage. And it was written down and read aloud before me. Afterwards, I sent off this form of writing everywhere into the countries. The people strove (to use it? abide by it?).” (Bisitun § 70) (Kuhrt 2007: p. 149)

Whereas “on clay tablets” indicates versions written in Elamite or Akkadian in cuneiform script, “on parchment” points to alphabetic, i.e. Aramaic script. Therefore, there is no doubt that from the very beginning the Achaemenids understood the role of local languages, especially Aramaic, which acquired the position of a universal *lingua franca* (cf. Dandamayev 2004: pp. 144–149). Despite the fact that Aramaic literature from the Persian period is well represented, it is, however, difficult to estimate the original scale and type of this literature (cf. Chapter 9 Aramaic Sources).

The language diversity and mosaic of local scribal traditions within the empire of the Achaemenids favored the growth of bi- and multilingualism. This seems to be one of the most important features of the scribal culture in this period. The scribes involved in official administration had to be able to understand both Elamite and Aramaic, which were used in the documentary exchange between officials. This means that they had to read and write in both languages and both (cuneiform and alphabetic) writing systems. This

may be inferred from the fact that the official correspondence from the king sent to, for example, a satrap was probably written in Elamite, but read to the satrap in Persian, i.e. simultaneously translated by the scribe. Furthermore, texts composed originally in Elamite circulated elsewhere in the state in an Aramaic version, so the scribe had to translate the written version from cuneiform-Elamite text into the alphabetic-Aramaic one. Conversely, even if the official document was composed in Aramaic, the scribe must have read it to the Persian addressee in Persian.

These multilinguistic skills of the scribes had a big impact on scribal education. The capable scribe had to be able to switch easily between the languages and scripts. Bilingualism was an important feature of the intellectual capacities of scribes and *literati* of those times. It is multilingualism that marked the entire Achaemenid period, which opens with the remarkable multilingual Bisitun inscription. The diversity of scribal systems and languages is highly impressive: Elamite script, read as Persian, Demotic script used to render Aramaic texts (P. Amherst 63; Hallo 2003, 1.99), bilingual inscriptions, e.g. Aramaic-Lydia (Donner and Rölling 1966–2002: n. 260, from Sardes), or Aramaic-Greek (Donner and Rölling 1966–2002: n. 262, from Limyra, in Lydia).

Erudition and Wisdom

Knowledge transmission in the Persian period, as discussed above, points to its dual form. The system of oral knowledge transmission endured alongside scribal education. This dualism is linked to another aspect of intellectual activity, namely its multicentrism. Even if the capitals of the Persians dominated the entire empire politically, the intellectual centers existed independently. These centers of intellectual life, for example Babylon, Egypt, and Ionia, flourished independently, all under the direct or indirect protection of the rulers. Very recently scholars debated the scale of Persian interference in the religious, legal, and intellectual lives of subjected peoples. There are clear indications that the ruling Persians carefully built the ideology for their dominion. Yet they had to guarantee the efficiency of the state (especially in fiscal and military matters). Does this necessarily lead, however, to a unified and centralized state, especially with regard to intellectual activity? Hints of Persian influence on other nations do not mean that they oppressed others in the sphere of intellectual life. Some elements of Persian culture are to be seen in other cultures (e.g. legislation); however, it does not mean that the Achaemenid state acted deliberately to Persianize other peoples. The vast areas under Persian political control remained diverse and faithful to local traditions.

This consideration allows us to conclude that there was hardly any unified system of wisdom transmission. The multicentricity and multicultural aspects of the territory and the existence of many different intellectual traditions did not favor uniformity. If any universal aspect of intellectual activity is to be presumed, one could point to Aramaic, as the most widely-known language suitable for transmitting literature. Aramaic seems to spread and continuously disseminate during the Persian era. Aramaic documents of different types (including seals), and their sheer number, found in nearly every part of the empire, attest to its popularity. The best-known example of the use of Aramaic as a language of literary expression is the so-called Wisdom of Ahiqar (Porten and Yardeni 1986–1999: Vol. 3, C1.1). Aramaic was also used by the Jewish intellectual elites, alongside Hebrew, which retained its role.

The history of Aramaic as an official language, the new *lingua franca* of the Near East, had an important result: Aramaic became attractive for literary expression, including wisdom literature. Many people involved in the administration, obviously members of local elites, knew the language. The traditional prestige of the scribe as the king's official was supplemented by the esteem that accrued to *literati*, who were able to read and write personally (in Aramaic), creating a new model of intellectual local elite. This was the case with the biblical figure Nehemiah, who as a Persian official was involved in local affairs, but who was an author himself. Furthermore, with him we see one of the first cases where the author states that he writes personally. This is the most important phenomenon in the intellectual development of the time. Officials were able to read and write by themselves, and were interested in literary matters. This undoubtedly is a turning point in the development of ancient scholars and *literati*. Nehemiah not only wrote his *Memoirs* but collected other literary texts, as may be inferred from 2 Maccabees 2:13.

The intellectual needs of the elite shaped the form and content of the literature, which illustrates the popularity of Wisdom literature. Such texts as Ahiqar, the original form of the biblical Book of Proverbs, may be representative of a wider phenomenon of the creation and development of Wisdom literature. The “international” status of Aramaic helped the literature and new literary genres and themes to “travel” across the wide areas of the empire. Even if the best-documented case is the Aramaic texts of Ahiqar found in Egypt, one may posit that it illustrates an entirely new phenomenon. Such an intellectual willingness to use new forms of expression, which gained high esteem worldwide, may favor cultural exchange. One of the most intriguing elements of such supposed exchange is the relationship between the Greeks and the members of Near Eastern elites. The area of contact in Ionia, as well as numerous Greek visitors to the East, created a fine basis for fruitful intellectual relationships. One may return to the old hypothesis of Arnaldo Momigliano, who highlighted the similarities between Greek and biblical

historiography. Momigliano hypothesized the existence of a refined Persian historiography, already in the Achaemenid period, despite the lack of any traces (Momigliano 1990: pp. 5–28; cf. 1975: pp. 123–149). There is no evidence for a hypothetical Persian historiography influencing both literatures; however, the sources are sufficient to imagine a direct link between the two. Already in the fifth century BCE, but surely during the fourth century BCE, there were many opportunities for Jewish intellectuals, like Nehemiah, to become familiar with parts of Greek heritage, such as historiography (cf. Van Seters 1988; Nielsen 1997; Wesselius 2002).

To sum up this discussion of wisdom and erudition, there is a paradox in the higher culture of the Persian period. Despite the underrepresentation of the mother language of the ruling Persians in script and intellectual exchange, their empire had a strong impact on the development of intellectual life. Indirectly, by allowing Aramaic to become a well-known and widespread common language of the elites, the Persians created new circumstances for intellectual activity. This readiness for literary borrowings, exchange and genre adaptation in literature established the foundations for the future intercultural events in the Hellenistic era.

NOTE

- 1 Diakonoff claims that the needs of the royal court of the scribal service in Old Persian would have been fulfilled by only one scribe (Gershevitch 1971: p. 7).

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CHAPTER 90

Astronomy and Astrology

John M. Steele

Introduction

The Achaemenid Persian conquest of Babylonia brought the Persian Empire into direct contact with a thriving tradition of astronomy and astrology. This tradition stretched back more than a millennium and included the observation of celestial phenomena, the application of mathematics to modeling some of those same phenomena, and the interpretation of certain astronomical phenomena through a system of omen divination. By the time of the Persian conquest, detailed and regular reports of astronomical observations were being recorded in Babylonia. From these observations, a variety of methods had been developed to predict astronomical events such as eclipses of the sun and moon or the first and last visibilities of a planet. Astronomy was also being increasingly frequently utilized in the regulation of the calendar. This astronomical tradition continued to develop throughout the Persian period and down into the Seleucid and Parthian periods.

The only known contemporary sources attesting to the practice of astronomy and astrology in the Achaemenid Persian Empire are cuneiform tablets from Babylonia. The majority of these tablets are believed to be from Babylon, with smaller numbers from Uruk, Nippur, and Sippar. It is possible that astronomical cuneiform texts were written in other parts of the empire – an astronomical text from Babylon describing the lunar eclipse of 25 March 442 BCE says that the eclipse was seen “in Susa and the open country” (Hunger 2001:

p. 35), which suggests some astronomical activity outside of the Babylonian heartland – but no such texts have so far been identified. It is possible that astronomy in the Babylonian tradition was taken up by scholars elsewhere in the empire, and equally possible that a native Persian astronomical tradition continued to be practiced in other parts of the empire (Sołtysiak 2015), but at present we have no direct evidence in support of these possibilities. In this chapter, therefore, I confine my discussion to the evidence from Babylonia.

The Calendar

Following the conquest of Babylon, Cyrus II adopted the Babylonian lunisolar calendar for use throughout his empire (Assar 2003). The lunisolar calendar operated as follows (note that the Babylonian day began at sunset): months have either 29 or 30 days depending upon whether the new moon crescent is visible on the evening that begins the 30th day. If the moon is visible, that day becomes the first day of a new month; if it is not visible, the day stays the 30th and the new month begins on the following day. Twelve months of either 29 or 30 days total on average about 355 days, roughly 10 days short of the length of the solar year. In order to keep the months in approximate accord with the seasons, therefore, it is necessary to add an extra “intercalary” month every three years or so.

Traditionally, the right and responsibility for determining when to intercalate lay with the king, in part no doubt because it had consequences for the collection of taxes and tributes. Several astronomical schemes for determining intercalations are known from pre-Achaemenid Mesopotamia, but there is no evidence that these schemes were used in practice. However, early in the Achaemenid period a fixed 19-year cycle of intercalation was adopted (Britton 2007). This cycle assigns seven intercalations at specific two- and three-year intervals within 19 years. The adoption of an astronomically regulated calendar marked a significant ideological and political change. Previously, regulation of the calendar was both the prerogative and the responsibility of the king, who could make the final decision on whether or not to intercalate, and probably at times made those decisions for his own short-term gain. After the introduction of the 19-year cycle, however, responsibility for the administration of the calendar lay with the astronomical experts who were attached to the temples (Steele 2011a). It is interesting that this transition takes place during a period of foreign rule in Babylonia and it raises the question of whether a native Babylonian king would have felt able to relinquish control over the calendar in this way, despite the practical and probably economic benefits to an empire covering a large geographical expanse of a calendar that could be fixed in advance (Steele 2012).

In the century before the Persian conquest, Babylonian astronomers developed techniques for predicting whether a month would have 29 or 30 days. These methods made use of measurements of the time interval between the moon and the sun crossing the horizon at sunrise or sunset on the days around new and full moon, made either earlier that year or 18 and 19 years earlier (Brack-Bernsen 2002). From the Persian period we have evidence that the beginning of each month was sometimes, perhaps usually, predicted using these astronomical methods rather than relying on observation of the new moon crescent; by the Hellenistic period, and quite possibly also during the Persian period, prediction of the length of each month was the norm (Steele 2007a).

Astronomical Observations

By the beginning of the Achaemenid period a regular and systematic program of astronomical observation was in operation in Babylon. The so-called “astronomical diaries” (EN-NUN *ša gi-né-e* lit. “regular watching”) contain night-by-night records of observations of astronomical phenomena (Sachs and Hunger 1988). Each diary typically covered half a year and was divided into sections for each month. Within each monthly section, a night-by-night record of astronomical phenomena was given followed by monthly summaries of certain planetary phenomena as well as three kinds of non-astronomical material: the height of the river Euphrates in Babylon, the quantity of six staple commodities that could be obtained for one shekel of silver in the market in Babylon, and selected historical events.

The following astronomical observations were generally recorded in an astronomical diary: the time interval between the sun and the moon crossing the horizon on six specific occasions around new and full moon during the month (the so-called “lunar six”); the passage of the moon by a group of reference stars (the so-called “Normal Stars”) situated unevenly in a band around the ecliptic; the dates of the first and last visibilities, stations, and acronychal risings of the planets, often accompanied by the position of the planet in the zodiac; the passages of the planets by the Normal Stars with measurements of the distance of the planet “above” or “below” the star; eclipses of the sun and moon; and occasional irregular astronomical phenomena such as comets, meteors, and haloes. On occasion, predictions of some of these phenomena were reported in place of observations, either because bad weather made observation impossible (indicated, for example, by phrases such as “clouds, I did not watch”), because an anticipated event did not occur, or because an event was predicted to take place during the daytime. The dates of the equinoxes, solstices and the first visibility, acronychal rising, and last visibility of

Sirius are also recorded in the diaries. By the last decades of the Achaemenid period the dates of these phenomena were not observed but instead taken from a simple numerical scheme based upon the 19-year intercalation cycle which continued in use throughout the Seleucid period (Neugebauer 1975: pp. 357–366). It is not certain whether the dates of these phenomena recorded in the earlier part of the Achaemenid period were determined from observation or from a different numerical scheme.

By far the most common type of observation recorded in the diaries was a measurement of the position of the moon or a planet relative to one of the Normal Stars. Two typical examples, both taken from the astronomical diary from the 12th year of Artaxerxes III, read as follows (Sachs and Hunger 1988: pp. 142–153):

Night of the 12th, beginning of the night, the moon was $1\frac{1}{2}$ cubits in front of the King (α Leonis). [Diary No. -346 Rev. 4]

Night of the 23rd, last part of the night, Mercury was 2 cubits 8 fingers below the Rear Star of the Goatfish (β Capricorni). [Diary No. -346 Obv. 28]

The stars referred to in these reports were two of 28 stars used as standard reference points in the sky by the Babylonians. These stars were collectively known as MÚL ŠID.MEŠ, “counting stars,” and are usually referred to as “Normal Stars” in modern scholarship. The 28 stars are spaced at irregular intervals around the zodiac, some close together, others leaving considerable gaps between them. A small number of additional stars were occasionally used to supplement the 28 Normal Stars (Jones 2004).

The measurements of the distance of the moon and planets from the Normal Stars were made in units of cubits (KÙŠ) and fingers (SI), where there were 24 fingers in one cubit. Theoretical texts show that the cubit was taken to be equal to 2° , although studies of the Babylonian observations indicate that in practice a cubit was slightly larger than 2° (Jones 2004). The directions “in front of” (*ina* IGI) and “behind” (*ár*) were measured roughly parallel to the ecliptic, corresponding to the moon or planet’s direction of motion; “above” (*e*) and below (SIG) were measured perpendicular to this direction. Thus distances “in front of” and “behind” correspond approximately to differences in celestial longitude and distances “above” and “below” correspond approximately to differences in celestial latitude (Jones 2004; Steele 2007b).

Also regularly reported in the diaries were the first and last visibilities, stationary points, and acronychal risings of the planets, known collectively as “synodic phenomena.” For example, from the same Astronomical Diary for the 12th year of Artaxerxes III we read:

The 21st, Mercury’s last appearance in the west in Capricorn. [Diary No. -346 Obv. 10]

For the inner planets (Mercury and Venus) the dates of the first and last days of visibility in the east and in the west are recorded accompanied by a statement of the position of the planet on that day. For the outer planets (Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn), in addition to the dates of first and last visibility, the date of the first and second stations when the planet begins and ends its period of retrograde motion, and the date of acronychal rising when the planet rises at sunset, are recorded. The position of the planet on the day of the synodic phenomenon may be given either within a constellation or relative to one of the Normal Stars or, after about 400 BCE, within a sign of the zodiac.

The zodiac is an abstract division of the sky into 12 equal parts, each of which is subdivided into 30° , in total making a complete circuit of 360° . In observational texts the zodiac appears in two contexts: in statements of the position of a planet on the occasion of one of its synodic phenomena, and in summaries given at the end of each month of the sign of the zodiac in which a planet is located (in later texts the date on which the planet crosses from one sign of the zodiac to another is also given in these summaries). Because the zodiac cannot be observed directly as its boundaries form an invisible mathematical division of the sky, observations of the position of a planet were in the first instance made by reference to stars which could then be converted into positions within the zodiac (Huber 1958). Two catalogs giving the position of stars within the zodiac are presently known (Roughton et al. 2004).

In addition to the regular observations of the passage of the moon by the Normal Stars, two other types of lunar phenomena were regularly recorded: the lunar six and eclipses. The lunar six are a series of measurements of the time between the moon and sun crossing the horizon on specific days during the time. The lunar six are as follows: on the first day of the month, NA, the time interval between sunset and the setting of the moon; near full moon, ŠÚ, the time between moonset and sunrise when the moon set for the last time before sunrise; NA, the time between sunrise and moonset when the moon set for the first time after sunrise; ME, the time between moonrise and sunset when the moon rose for the last time after sunset; GE₆, the time between sunset and moonrise when the moon rose for the first time after sunset; and, toward the end of the month, KUR, the time between moonrise and sunrise when the moon was visible for the last time (Sachs and Hunger 1988: p. 20).

The following details may be recorded for an eclipse: the date, the time when the eclipse began measured by the unit UŠ before or after sunrise or sunset, the duration of the phases of the eclipse, the total duration of the eclipse, the magnitude of the eclipse, the visibility of planets during the eclipse, the position of the moon at the time of the eclipse (either relative to a Normal Star or in a sign of the zodiac), the direction of the eclipse shadow across the surface of the sun or moon, and meteorological remarks (especially the direction of the wind) (Sachs and Hunger 1988: pp. 23–24). Because the days on

which eclipses could take place were predicted in advance, even very small eclipses were observed and recorded in the diaries.

The astronomical diaries provided the observational material for a variety of other astronomical texts. For example, collections of eclipse observations and observations of the phenomena of individual planets covering several years were compiled from the records in the diaries. These collections could either be formatted as simple lists of consecutive phenomena or arranged in a grid format that exploited the periodic repetition of phenomena of the moon or planets. For example, several eclipse compilations are set out in grids where cells in the same row of the grid contain eclipse records separated by 223 months, an eclipse cycle known today as the Saros. Similarly, compilations of Venus data are known arranged in eight-year cycles. These compilations illustrated the period behavior of lunar or planetary phenomena, allowing the Babylonian astronomers to investigate the motion of the moon and planets and even to predict astronomical phenomena.

Predictive and Theoretical Astronomy

The recognition that certain planetary and lunar phenomena repeat on the same day in the Babylonian calendar after a specific number of years provided a means by which phenomena could be predicted using the observational reports recorded in the astronomical diaries. Prediction of planetary phenomena using such methods is relatively straightforward. For example, after 59 years the synodic phenomena of Saturn will recur on approximately the same day of the Babylonian calendar. On those dates Saturn will be at roughly the same position in the zodiac. Furthermore, Saturn's passages by the Normal Stars will also occur on roughly the same day in the calendar after 59 years, and the difference in latitude between Saturn and the star will be identical to within a fraction of a degree. Thus, simply copying the observational record for 59 years earlier will produce a fairly accurate prediction of Saturn phenomena for a coming year. In some years it will be necessary to apply corrections to the date of phenomena to take into account intercalation, and more accurate predictions can be achieved by applying known small corrections of a few days to the predicted dates; we have ample evidence for both of these factors having been taken into account by the Babylonian astronomers (Steele 2011b).

A variety of periods for the planets was known to the Babylonian astronomers (Steele 2011b). The most commonly used were 46 years for Mercury, 8 years for Venus, 47 years and 79 years for Mars, 71 years and 83 years for Jupiter, and 59 years for Saturn. These periods were probably known already in the Neo-Babylonian period; clear evidence for use of several of these

periods can be found in a text containing data from the last few years of the reign of Cambyses (Britton 2008).

The so-called “Saros” cycle of 18 years (223 months) was used to predict certain lunar phenomena. Eclipses of the sun and the moon recur with similar circumstances after one Saros, but at about one-third of a day later in the day. The Saros can therefore be used quite simply to predict lunar or solar eclipses. The Babylonians, however, developed a more advanced technique for predicting eclipses utilizing the Saros cycle. The same technique was applied to both lunar and solar eclipses so in the following I will confine my discussion to lunar eclipses for simplicity. Already by the seventh century BCE, perhaps earlier, it had been realized that eclipses were possible at intervals of six months or occasionally five months. It was also known that eclipses could recur after a Saros of 223 months. By combining these two astronomical facts, it was realized that within one Saros there are 38 eclipse possibilities, 33 of which are separated by a six-month interval from the preceding eclipse possibility, with the remaining five separated by a five-month interval. Distributing the five-month intervals as evenly as possible within the 38 eclipse possibilities is a natural step. Because eclipse possibilities repeat after a Saros, the pattern of 38 eclipse possibilities can be repeated over and over to allow the dates of all eclipse possibilities over many centuries to be predicted. A system of this kind was used in Babylonia from at least the beginning of the sixth century BCE (Steele 2000a).

The Saros cycle was also employed in the prediction of the lunar six. In this case, the lunar six themselves do not repeat after a Saros, but certain combinations of the lunar six do when added together. The Babylonians succeeded in deriving a set of simple arithmetical procedures for determining the lunar six based upon data from 18 and 19 years earlier (Brack-Bernsen 1999). In addition to allowing the prediction of the lunar six, these methods provided the means to predict the length of each month (Brack-Bernsen 2002). We have evidence of systematic observation and prediction of the lunar six already from the beginning of the sixth century BCE (Huber and Steele 2007).

In addition to using cycles to predict astronomical phenomena, a new method of astronomical prediction was developed during the Achaemenid period which used more advanced mathematical methods to calculate the position of the moon, sun, and planets and the dates of lunar and planetary phenomena. These methods used mathematical tools known to modern scholars as zigzag functions and step functions to calculate the position of the moon, sun, and planets in the zodiac and related phenomena such as the velocity of the moon and the length of daylight (Neugebauer 1975). Mathematically and astronomically complex and theoretically correct, these methods often produced results that were, however, no more accurate than the simpler method employing cycles, and both approaches co-existed until

the end of cuneiform astronomy. The advanced mathematical methods first appear around 400 BCE and had reached their final form by the end of the Achaemenid period.

Astrology

Significant changes in the practice of astrology in Mesopotamia took place during the Achaemenid period. Two main reasons for these changes can be identified: rule by a non-native king, who often resided outside of Babylonia, made the traditional corpus of celestial omens, whose apodoses most frequently concern the king and his rule, less relevant, and the development of the zodiac provided a new tool that could be exploited astrologically. Two new developments within Babylonian astrology are particularly significant: horoscopic astrology (the prediction of the life of an individual from the celestial circumstances at the moment of his or her birth) and new forms of astral medicine.

The prediction of the life of a native from the examination of astronomical data at the moment of birth is first attested in a horoscope dating to 410 BCE. In total, 28 tablets containing horoscopes are known (Rochberg 1998). A typical horoscope includes some or all of the following astronomical data: the date and time of the birth of a child (in some cases the child is named, in others he is referred to simply as “the child”); the position of the planets either within signs of the zodiac or, occasionally, with respect to the Normal Stars; the position of the sun and the moon within the signs of the zodiac; lunar six timings; nearby eclipses; and the dates of solstices, equinoxes, and Sirius phenomena. Most horoscopes do not include any predictions for the life of the child (this information was presumably conferred orally to the client). Generally, the position of the heavenly bodies is given only to the zodiacal sign, but in some later horoscopes positions are stated to the nearest degree, which suggests that mathematical astronomical methods were used to calculate the data in such cases (Steele 2000b).

The zodiac was also applied to astral medicine during the Achaemenid period (Heeßel 2008). Simple mathematical schemes equated the day in the year with a position in the zodiac, which in turn indicated which ingredients should be used in making a medical remedy (Steele 2017). The invention of the zodiac during the Achaemenid period, therefore, was a crucial development across the whole of astronomy and astrology. Without it, neither the new methods of mathematical astronomy nor the new developments within horoscopic astrology and astral medicine would have been possible, and it remains one of the most significant legacies of ancient Near Eastern astronomy today.

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CHAPTER 91

Persian “Enlightenment”

Sebastian Fink and Josef Wiesehöfer

Introduction

“It has been said that the whole cultural development would have taken a different course if the Persians had been the winner at Salamis, so that we would ultimately have to thank Themistocles and his fleet law for the assets of our present civilization. This is a rather superficial judgment; the fate of great nations does not depend on such contingencies. If otherwise, the sea storm that shattered part of Xerxes’ fleet on the coast of Magnesia would have deserved the credit to have rescued Hellas from Persian hardship at least as much as Themistocles. Rather, the Greeks became winners in the fight against the Persian Empire because they were superior to their enemies morally and intellectually. Even if Xerxes had succeeded in conquering the Greek peninsula, Hellenic culture would not have perished, because this culture rested at that time mainly on Ionia that had indeed been under Persian rule for more than half a century” (Beloch 1912: pp. 74–75).

Karl Julius Beloch has been one of the few ancient historians who have not excluded a link between Persian rule and cultural development. However, even his reference to Persian-time Ionia as a center of Hellenic culture leaves the question unanswered as to whether Ionia was able to become that cultural heart just because it had (i) for a long time cultivated a regular and intensive cultural dialogue with the cultural centers of the Middle East, and because it had (ii), as part of an empire, benefited from the fact that the economic,

infrastructural, and especially the political and diplomatic conditions were such that not only objects but also people and ideas could now more easily change their residences, even over longer distances, or could benefit from intellectual exchange. This issue will be addressed below with the help of the example of the so-called pre-Socratics. First, however, the historical background of Persian-time “Enlightenment” is explained in more detail.

The Historical Background

According to Herodotus’ *Histories*, Croesus tried to take advantage of the Persian conquest of Media by the former Median “vassal” Cyrus by extending his realm east of the Halys river – previously the frontier between the Lydian and the Median empires (1.6.1; 1.28, 72). However, new studies of the Median “empire” cast doubt on the imperial character of Median rule, a continuing Median presence in eastern Anatolia, and the historicity of the Halys border (Lanfranchi et al. 2003a,b; Rollinger 2020; 2010). They prefer to speak of a Median confederation of “tribes” that united and formed an alliance with the Babylonians in order to fight against their deadly foes, the Assyrians, but did not set up a lasting empire and did not force the Persians into vassalage (the Persian model of empire was rather Elamite) (for criticism of Persian “vassalage,” see Rollinger 1999; Henkelman 2003; for the Elamite heritage: Henkelman 2003, 2008; Alvarez-Mon and Garrison 2011). Certainly, much speaks for military conflict (cf. the “night battle” in Hdt. 1.74; not to be linked with the solar eclipse of May 28, 585 BCE: Rollinger 2003b: pp. 309–310; for the eclipse see below) and other contacts between Lydians and Medes, which explain the Greek use of the term *Medoi* for “Persians” and *medismos* for “collaboration with the Persians” (Rollinger 2003b: p. 318 n. 141 rightly stresses the fact that the “Median” terminology is normally used to underline the special character of the dangers coming from the east), but the Babylonian presence in northern Mesopotamia, Syria, and Cilicia makes Median rule over eastern Anatolia unlikely. Finally, the Halys borderline separating the Lydians and the Persians is a construct based on information about frontiers of Persian provinces in Anatolia in the fifth century BCE, created by Herodotus because of his preference for conspicuous borderlines that demarcate territories assigned by divine will to specific peoples or empires (Rollinger 2003b: pp. 310–313).

When Croesus opened hostilities against Cyrus, a member of the Persian Teispid clan, is uncertain. The Nabonidus Chronicle (II 15–18; Grayson 1975: no. 7, pp. 107–108) has been cited in support of dating the conquest of Lydia and Croesus’ death to the year 547 BCE, but this is no longer tenable (see Rollinger 2009, 1993: pp. 188–197; Rollinger and Kellner 2019; Michels

2011; Räthel 2015). The Chronicle here probably refers to a campaign against Urartu instead. The Persian sack of Sardis is, however, archeologically attested, and it is highly probable, *pace* Herodotus, that the last Mermnad king died during this event (see Burkert 1985; Greenewalt Jr. 1992; Bichler 2000: pp. 251–254; West 2003: pp. 418–420; Cahill and Kroll 2005; Roosevelt 2009: p. 65).

Ionian and Aeolian troops probably supported Croesus in his war against the Persians (Hdt. 1.141) as Lydian "vassals." According to Herodotus, only Miletus was able to reach an agreement with Cyrus that continued the terms previously granted by the Lydians. The historian's account of Ionian and Aeolian efforts to secure Spartan support and of mutual threats between Spartans and Persians (1.152–1.153) does not make historical sense, but fits well into the overall concept of the *Histories*: Aristagoras' later quest for military support in Hellas and Athens' support for the Ionians thus have earlier counterparts. Once again, Herodotus succeeds in integrating the two Greek hegemonial powers that will eventually defeat the Persians into the earlier history of wars between Greeks and Asian superpowers. Moreover, for the first time, he hints at the Persian kings' overestimation of their abilities and their fatal underestimation of the particular qualities of the Greeks.

Herodotus has the Persian army withdrawing very quickly (1.153) and leaving the Lydian Pactyes in charge. This might be explained by urgent preparations for campaigns in eastern Iran or against Babylon, but is hardly conceivable if Lydia had not yet been pacified and Ionia left humiliated by unilaterally imposed peace terms. Therefore, the imposition of such unfavorable terms, and an Ionian request for help from Sparta, if historical at all, make sense only after the failure of Pactyes' rebellion and the reconquest of the coastal regions by Cyrus' generals, Mazares and Harpagus. Herodotus' statement that (only) the gold from Sardis enticed the inhabitants of the coastal cities to join Pactyes' revolt (1.154) seems to support such a sequence of events.

Sardis, with its strategically favorable location, fortifications, proven political and administrative infrastructure, and public spaces, was the obvious place to set up a satrapal residence and the administrative center of western Asia Minor. From the Persian army's quick departure to the east, Herodotus' account, and the later parallel in Babylon we can deduce that the Persian king not only kept in post – under the supervision of the Persian Tabalus – numerous locals (like Pactyes) whom he considered loyal, but also took over most existing administrative and fiscal institutions, among them those which regulated the dependent status of the Greek cities. The rebellion of Pactyes, which, according to Herodotus, infected wide sections of the population of the region, surprised the Persians and forced Cyrus, despite his other commitments, to act immediately (Hdt. 1.154–1.169; Plut. Mor. 859 A–B; Justin 1.7.11. For the fate of the Lydians, see Herodotus 1.155.2, with Bichler 2000: p. 255). If we trust Herodotus, the rebellion could only be quashed

after several years, but was not supported by those cities and sanctuaries which had negotiated favorable terms with the Persians, or indeed – like Didyma, Aulæ (the authenticity of the so-called “Gadatas Letter” (ML12), which mentions the agreement with Aulæ, is disputed, cf. Schmitt 1996 with Briant 2003; Gauger 2000: pp. 205–212), and probably Clarus – had been given privileges by Cyrus, following Croesus’ example (for the history of Pactyes’ rebellion, cf. Briant 2002: pp. 37–38, 882–883 [with the older literature]). Herodotus gives little information on Persian sanctions against the conquered cities, but reports that Harpagus made them promise to take part in his military campaigns against the Carians and Lycians, against Halicarnassus and Cnidus (1.171) (Cilicia continued to be governed by a dynast who had the title *syennesis* (Hdt. 1.74; called “king of the Cilicians” by Herodotus 5.118). In Lycia, local dynasts probably had the greatest political say; nominally, however, they had to accept Persian lordship). Whether the participation of Lydian and Ionian sculptors and artists in the building of the Persian royal residences at Pasargadae, and later at Susa and Persepolis (Nylander 1970, 1974; Roaf 1983. Cf. the praise of the Lydian and Ionian sculptors in Darius I’s foundation charter from Susa: DSf 47–49, 51–52), was a consequence of Pactyes’ revolt, we do not know.

In the coastal Greek cities, unlike in other conquered territories, the Persians came across extremely unstable political conditions, due not least to the existence of “isolated aristocrats, tyrants striving for survival, and powerless priests” (Walter 1993: p. 275). The tyrants – not all of them appointed by the Persians – became their contacts and allies: only these autocrats guaranteed a consistent loyal policy, not least because of a personal pledge of loyalty to the Great King (Walter 1993: p. 275; cf. 273–275). It is not enough to interpret the Persian appointment of tyrants only as a “rewarding of loyal supporters” (as does de Libero 1996: p. 415). And they more than anyone benefited from Persian backing, since this support secured their position: the overthrow of a tyrant would normally provoke Persian reprisals (Hdt. 6.9–6.10, 13 notes that the tyrants flee to Persia after their expulsion; the Ionians interpreted the political system of their cities as joint rule of Persians and tyrants [Hdt. 6.22]).

The influence of Persian rule on the culture of Lydia has long been difficult to assess, and there is still no consensus about the impact of Persia proper on the provinces. New books on Achaemenid Sardis and Anatolia (Dusinberre 2003, 2013) have tried to demonstrate a quick consolidation of Lydian affairs after the Persian conquest with the help of a combination of imperial influence on both ideology and way of life, and a return to, or preservation of, “Lydian” and other traditions. At Sardis, a fresh society is said to have developed with new values and carefully altered forms of material culture. However, others have asked not to overestimate the impact of Persian models on provincial lifestyles and not to rashly conclude from the visual imagery that its aristocratic

commissioner was of this or that ethnic origin. "... there existed a general consensus of the imperial elites within the whole empire that these representative activities were of paramount importance" (Jacobs 2014; quote: p. 343).

Miletus "had been at the height of her fortunes" before the Ionian revolt, "and was indeed the chief ornament of Ionia" (Hdt. 5.28; Gorman 2001). Undoubtedly, Herodotus referred not only to the economic status of Miletus but also to its role as a cultural center. Scholars used to find it hard to reconcile Miletus' political attachment to Persia with its intellectually highly stimulating atmosphere, but it has long since become clear that the Ionian beginnings of a philosophy of nature, science, and analytical geometry, as well as important progress in the disciplines of geography and ethnography, occurred "in the shadow of the rise of the Persian empire" (Burkert 2003).

"Enlightenment"

Enlightenment is often described as a watershed between western and non-western cultural evolutions. The statement that a culture lacks enlightenment is a euphemism for its supposed state of underdevelopment. In contrast to the supposed uniqueness of the European Enlightenment of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries CE, many other "enlightenments" can be found in the literature: thus, for example, in Greece, Rome, India, China, or in countries belonging to the Arabian sphere of influence. Recent works on the European Enlightenment have clearly shown that enlightenment was no one-way phenomenon. It occurred in a globalized context, and developments in other parts of the world had a deep impact on those in Europe (see Conrad 2012). This multitude of enlightenments clearly evolves from a new perspective on historical developments that dismisses a Eurocentric view of human history.

If we agree that these epochs are somehow comparable, this leads us to the question: why and how do enlightenments occur in a certain setting? Does enlightenment mark a particular development in a culture or can one culture produce several enlightenments? Does enlightenment mark the end of religion, and so to speak, the end of culture that loses its firm foundation? Or does the expulsion of the gods from the physical world and their resettlement in a metaphysical sphere mark a development in religion? Does it lead to a morally advanced new type of religion? Certainly the sharp distinction between a physical and a metaphysical world, whenever it took place, makes a new form of disbelief possible – namely, the disbelief in the existence of the whole metaphysical sphere. It seems possible – but due to the difficulties of dating the question will hardly be answered with certainty – that this distinction between a physical and a metaphysical world occurred for the first time in Zoroastrianism (Skjærvo 2011: pp. 337–340 summarizes the essentials of Zoroastrian beliefs).

Herodotus (3.38) tells us the well-known story of Darius and the different customs of Greeks and Indians in order to demonstrate that men were convinced “that their own usages far surpass those of all others.” Is it just by chance that Herodotus sets this story on the stage of the imperial court of Darius, or does this setting intentionally connect relativism with huge empires? It should be taken into consideration that the connection of different people with different customs under one rule hints at an increased exchange of ideas within those empires, and the story of Darius seems to be prototypical. The phenomenon also touches the fringes of empires because the adjacent states were often integrated into imperial gift-exchange systems, and economic, scientific, and diplomatic exchange was quite regular (for the Assyrian Empire and the Greek West, see Gunter 2012).

The knowledge that human customs vary broadly has to be handled somehow. One possibility is to decide that the others are savages in order to keep one’s own value system intact. The other is to accept that there are other ways of life which might be equal to – or sometimes even better than – one’s own system. It can also be argued that different people by nature have different customs, but the exposure to different customs puts one’s own system in question. This leads to the question whether the rise of empires also leads to a rise in enlightenment? Traditionally the Pre-Socratics are seen as the first human beings that paved the way for philosophy and science, and therefore this alleged first enlightenment is combined with the concept of a Greek miracle.

Sources for the Pre-Socratics

At a first glance of the three volumes of Diels and Kranz’s “Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker” (*Fragments of the Pre-Socratics*) (1951), the work that is still regarded as the fundamental text collection for pre-Socratic philosophy, it seems as if our knowledge of those early philosophers rests on a solid textual base. But things are not that easy. As the title of the work already implies, we do not have many complete texts authored by pre-Socratic philosophers – or, to be more precise, we have three works edited by Diels that are complete: two speeches of Gorgias and the *Dissoi logoi*, a work of uncertain authorship.

While the last decades have brought forth some new pre-Socratic texts, the most impressive finding was surely the Derveni papyrus, which contains allusions to a number of pre-Socratic philosophers and was described as “the last of presocratic comogonies” (Bernabé 2013). However, we still largely rely on four main source groups: the works of Plato, the works of Aristotle and his school, the Doxographers (Biographers), and the Commentators, which all have their problematic aspects. It is well known that Plato and Aristotle often used their predecessors in order to prove the superiority of their own

"post-Socratic" philosophy, and therefore their main interest in the Pre-Socratics was not that of an historian of philosophy. Instead, they rather searched for earlier opinions on the topics they treated themselves, and they therefore sometimes seem to have adapted the teachings of the Pre-Socratics to their own needs. The Doxographers and Commentators often gave very schematic accounts of the philosophical system of the Pre-Socratics and in many cases concentrated on entertaining anecdotes and impressive sayings (see Runia 2008 or McKirahan 2010: pp. 1–6 for a detailed discussion of the sources for the Pre-Socratics with hints to further literature). The problems arising from the attempt to reconstruct pre-Socratic philosophy mainly from late sources are discussed in Fehling (1994), who doubts that the search for the *arché*, the primordial matter that is the origin of everything that exists, was really a part of the Milesian tradition of Thales and his successors (Fehling 1994: pp. 71–75). Despite the large number of books that are attributed to nearly every Pre-Socratic in the later tradition, it is not entirely clear whether all of these early philosophers were also philosophic writers. It might be possible that at least for some of them – the possibility is proven by the famous case of Socrates, who is known only through the writings of his successors – writing was not very attractive and that they considered their teachings to belong to the sphere of oral transmission.

What Is New in Pre-Socratic Philosophy?

Given the problems of our sources it is quite hard to judge what was really new in pre-Socratic philosophy and to what extent these early Greek philosophers were part of an older, Oriental or maybe Mediterranean orbit. Thales has often been seen as one of the seven sages (they were first mentioned by Plato, Protagoras 342c–343b). The sayings which are attributed to these seven wise men can be seen as part of a genre that finds its first representation in Sumerian proverb collections that can be dated to the first half of the third millennium BCE (see Alster 2005).

It is only with the writings of Plato that we can clearly see a systematic philosophy at work that tries to establish the basic parts of the world as well as the basic parts of concepts, i.e. their definition, and then to reconstruct the diversity in all areas of this world from exactly these basic elements. Plato's work is, so to say, the first hard evidence for a lot of innovations that are attributed to the Pre-Socratics, and he is surely our first solid proof for the distinction between a real world (the world of ideas) and a world of lesser quality (the bodily world) and the view that this is the one we unfortunately live in. Given the richness of opinions and ideas that can be found in the works of Plato, we can make an educated guess that he could rely on an older philosophical tradition.

Compared to the ideas expressed in Mesopotamian cuneiform texts we can clearly see that philosophical argumentation in the meantime underwent one major change. Mesopotamian intellectuals, we may also call them philosophers, posed the question about the origin of the world, the nature of God, justice in the world, and the sense of life. So basically they asked the same questions that were also addressed by the ancient Greeks. By the way, it should be noted that the philosophical dialogue was not a genuine Greek invention. Philosophical dialogues can be found in Mesopotamia as well as in Egypt. Most probably they developed in an educational context for rhetorical training (Volk 2012: p. 217).

But there is a difference in the method of argumentation. While the Mesopotamian dialogues remain on a real-life level, pros and cons of an argument are investigated, examples are given, and things are compared and evaluated, Greek philosophical texts make use of a new type of concept – namely abstract concepts that could be defined and used to tell a new kind of story that was called a proof (Feyerabend 1987). The proof relies mainly on the elements of a concept (the definition) and on logical rules (for a history of logic in ancient Greece see Dumitriu 1977: pp. 69–270). The search for basic elements of some given thing, e.g. the world, was not a very prominent topic, maybe not a topic at all, in Mesopotamian philosophical speculation, but it became very popular in Greek speculation about the world. A role model for this new approach is Euclid. He deduced his whole geometry from a small set of axioms – the basic elements of geometry, so to say. As now most historians of mathematics would agree, most problems that were solved in Euclid's work were solved long before him, but only Euclid developed a system in which he could give a proof for these older solutions (Friberg 2007).

Philosophy, Science, Enlightenment, and the Disenchantment of the World

It still seems to be a widely held opinion that the beginning of science and philosophy and thereby the disenchantment of the world can be dated to May 28th, 585 BCE when Thales of Miletus reportedly was able to predict an eclipse of the sun (for a critical approach to the reality of this event, see Burkert 2013). Disenchantment is the common English translation of “Entzauberung,” a term coined by Max Weber in 1919. The ability to predict and understand future events through means of calculation and the resulting view of phenomena like eclipses not as the direct expression of a divine will but rather as natural phenomena that can be given a natural explanation is the core phenomenon of Weber's idea of the disenchantment of the world (see Weber 1919: p. 16). Weber's theory that the ability to explain and even predict natural phenomena

leads to a retreat of divine forces in the world is quite convincing, and ample evidence can be found in the history of ideas, ranging from pre-Socratic philosophers to proponents of Marxism in Russia, who wanted to demonstrate that everything under the sun could be understood and explained. Gods were not supposed to intervene in this world.

The Assyriologist David Brown took up Weber's theory but he questioned the usual location and dating of this phenomenon and argued in favor of its rise in Mesopotamia, since the regularity of stellar phenomena was recognized in Mesopotamia and, as a late consequence of this insight, the first system of accurate predictions of certain stellar phenomena was developed in the same area around 750 BCE (see Brown 2010: p. 12). The Mesopotamian system of divination relies on the basic idea that the gods communicate with humans by means of signs. They write on the sky as well as on the liver of a sacrificial lamb, and the initiated diviner is able to read all kinds of divine messages (Maul 2013). "The ordinary, expected, or regular repeating phenomena were understood to be manifestations of harmony between earthly behaviour and the ideal master plan of a god or gods in question, while the apparently irregular, or extraordinary occurrences were manifestations of direct divine intervention in nature, in order to comment (positively or negatively, but mostly the latter) on human affairs" (Brown 2010: p. 12).

Against this background we can understand disenchantment in the following way: the regularity or, respectively, "naturalness" of certain phenomena is quite obvious (like the movement of the sun and the moon). Other phenomena, however, such as eclipses, that can be observed only quite seldom, seem to be irregular on first sight, and as a result of their irregularity they are interpreted as acts of the divine will in the world. When convincing explanations are found for a lot of these phenomena and their regularity is proven by our ability to predict them, they are not ominous signs anymore; they have become part of the natural world. Brown (2010: p. 14) cites evidence from ancient China where only unpredicted eclipses were regarded as ominous signs threatening the life of the emperor. For Mesopotamia, things seem to be different. It is clear – a short look in a random newspaper can convince us – that the rise of accurate prediction has not even completely extinguished the belief in astrology in modern times. Neither was this the case in Mesopotamia. We may point to the case of Esarhaddon, who seems to have transgressed the borderline between religion and superstition even according to contemporary Mesopotamian standards (Fink 2018). This Assyrian king commanded that the so-called ritual of a substitute king should be performed – expecting that the evil announced by the eclipse would fall on that substitute later to be killed – on the occasion of lunar and solar eclipses. Those phenomena – to our knowledge – should have been predictable at Esarhaddon's time (von Soden 1959: p. 365).

But even if this development is not linear and without setbacks, the world is disenchanted little by little. Every explanation of a certain phenomenon removes some “magic” from our universe, and this development leads to a universe in which divine beings do not intervene anymore (for a first step in this development of removing the gods from the real world, see Fink 2015). The adequate expression for this new way of understanding the world is maybe found in the letters of the German philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716 CE) when he describes the world as a machine that was once created by God and now works without his intervention until the end of times (Leibniz 1991: pp. 19–20). As the gods play no active role in this world anymore, intellectuals are able to question what these inactive gods are good for, and finally some thinkers arrive at a point where they declare that the whole universe is held together by natural laws and that divine beings do not exist. When this atheistic opinion was expressed for the first time is not entirely clear (see, e.g., Nestle 1940: pp. 53–80; Lefkowitz 1989).

Early Greek Philosophy and the Ancient Near East

That early Greek philosophy was somehow influenced by Oriental lore seems to be a consensus today (see Burkert 2008; West 1971). But the question remains whether these influences can still be understood in the traditional way that only the Greeks were able to use Oriental material in order to build new theories on it and to approach the world in a new way (the Greek Miracle). In the traditional history of philosophy, Thales of Miletus is seen as the first scientist able to predict the eclipse of the sun, and it is often admitted that he must have had access to Mesopotamian knowledge. If this was the case, we might interpret the rise of Greek science and enlightenment as a reaction to the transfer of Mesopotamian knowledge to the West. But is it not somewhat irritating that the knowledge about regularities of stellar phenomena and the ability to predict the occurrence of rare phenomena (see Brown 2000: pp. 163–173) had such an impact on Greek culture but seem not to have had any impact on the culture where this knowledge arose?

Interestingly, there is a group of texts in Mesopotamian cuneiform literature that was interpreted as an expression of a faith crisis in Neo-Assyrian times (von Soden 1959; Dietrich 2009). Two texts are particularly significant as they bear witness to critical questions regarding the conventional belief that the gods and their representative on earth, the king, take care of the well-being of just people and that regular offerings secure human welfare in life (Fink 2017, Fink 2020). The first text is the so-called “Babylonian Theodicy” (Oshima 2013), a philosophical dialogue on the question of justice in the world. As a result of this discussion the question is raised whether one should organize his life along

the traditional religious lines or whether it would be wiser to act like the animals in the wilderness and to discard all human conventions in order to lead a good life. Doubts about divine justice seem to be a main motivation for changes in religious systems or the abandonment of religious practices such as sacrifices (see below), as they may no longer be regarded as effective (see Fink 2012).

In the case that the "Pessimistic Dialogue" (Lambert 1960), our second text, would have come down to us in Greek, nobody would have doubted that it was a masterpiece used by Sophists for their rhetorical training. The text in Akkadian language – most probably to be dated to the eighth century BCE – is a dialogue between a master and his slave. First, the master proposes to do something, and then the slave argues in favor of his master's enterprise. Immediately the master changes his mind and the clever slave now argues against the enterprise. The master and his slave argue about eating, going to a hunt, loving a wife, establishing a family, starting a revolution, and giving a sacrifice to the gods:

"Slave – listen to me." "Here I am, sire, here I am." "Quickly, fetch me water for my hands, and give it to me so that I can sacrifice to my god." "Sacrifice, sir, sacrifice. The man who sacrifices to his god is satisfied with the bargain: He is making loan upon loan." "No, slave, I will by no means sacrifice to my god." "Do not sacrifice, sir, do not sacrifice. You can teach your god to run after you like a dog, whether he asks you rites, or 'Do not consult you god', or anything else" (Lambert 1960: pp. 147–149, lines 53–61).

Like in the famous *Dissoi Logoi* (Robinson 1984), it is shown that everything has a positive and a negative aspect, arguments can be found to turn the most wonderful pleasures into tortures. This relativism is not in accordance with the depiction of the Orient as a static society ruled by conservative priests. Documents such as the Babylonian Theodicy and the Pessimistic Dialogue clearly show that alternate values, alternate ways of life, were discussed in Mesopotamian texts.

This text and several others (see Fink 2013) leave us with the impression that some changes were underway in first-millennium Mesopotamia. Maybe the rise of monotheistic ideas from Iran to Greece (Pongratz-Leisten 2011) can be seen as the result of such developments and as an attempt to find a solution for the faith crisis that perhaps was triggered by the rise of exact prediction as well as that of huge empires that led to an increasing trade and knowledge exchange and that fostered the insight that customs and religion were cultural phenomena. In Ionia, with its cities allocated along important sea routes, knowledge about different cultures was easy to acquire. The relativity of value systems perhaps led intellectuals there to search for a firm foundation of knowledge that had become insecure. In Mesopotamia, we have

ample evidence for insecurity; the solution the Mesopotamian texts proposed was the trust in the might and mercy of god. In Greece, new stories were told about God – using abstract concepts and logical proof in order to establish him as a firm truth.

Outlook

Ephesus, whose sanctuary of Artemis had probably welcomed the Persians' arrival and whose "temple of Croesus" (Bammer and Muss 1996) reached its completion under Persian domination (Burkert 2003: pp. 113–115), also took part in this development. Here, Heraclitus (22 B 14 DK = Clem. *Protr.* 22) marks the oldest surviving occurrence of *magoi* in Greek tradition, around the time of the Ionian Revolt. His coupling of *magoi* with (mystic) followers of the god Dionysus – whether he is referring to true *magoi*, to charlatans, or to legitimate (non-Iranian) religious experts who called themselves by that name is not clear – "represents the earliest example of a correlation that would come to be influential over philosophers, especially Plato, in the mid-fourth century BCE" (Horky 2009: p. 54). The intellectually stimulating and inspiring atmosphere in Ionia was surely not initiated by the Persians but was favored by the absence of internal and external wars and the unification of the Oriental world under one ruler. Aside from the possible forced use of specialists after Pactyes' rebellion and the Ionian Revolt, Persian supremacy also opened up lucrative new opportunities for Ionian artists, craftsmen, doctors, and members of other professions in the empire, and even at the Great King's court (Walser 1984: pp. 20–26).

The Ionian Revolt was a turning point in the history of Ionian-Persian relations, but one that did not affect all cities in the same way as Miletus, which was destroyed and had part of its population deported. Ephesus apparently refused to support the revolt and introduced a political system according to the principles of isonomy in 492 BCE (Heracl. fr. 121 D). And even in Miletus "the element of continuity [prevailed], since the rest of its population was able to preserve its home, traditions and therefore its identity far beyond the years of Persian rule" (Ehrhardt 2003: p. 18). After the Persian defeats at Salamis, Plataea, and Mycale (480–479 BCE), the local enemies of tyranny in many Greek cities of the islands and Asia Minor used the supremacy of the Hellenic fleet to expel their city lords, shake off Persian rule, and join the Delian League. Other cities were then or later unwillingly forced into the alliance.

The borderline between the territories of the Delian League and the possessions of the Great King never became an "iron curtain." Papyrological and archeological evidence testifies to the fact that western Asia Minor remained a zone of intensive cultural contacts and diplomatic networks for the purpose of maintaining local peace (Balcer 1985; Miller 1997: pp. 97–108; Whitby 1998; Wiesehöfer 2004).

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CHAPTER 92

Physicians and Medicine

Nils P. Heeßel

In the third book of his *Histories*, Herodotus of Halicarnassus, the famed Greek historian and ethnographer, narrates in great detail the story of the Greek physician Democedes, who lived for some time at the Persian court in Susa: Democedes, “who was a physician and practiced his art better than any other man of his time” (*Histories* 3.125), left his home town Croton in southern Italy due to disputes with his father and practiced his profession in different Greek cities before settling at the court of Polycrates of Samos. In the course of that ruler’s downfall he became a slave of the Persian governor Oroites and after Oroites’ murder he was deported to the court of King Darius I at Susa. Darius shortly afterwards twisted his ankle and his Egyptian physicians infuriated the king by furthering the pain by applying fairly rough and hurtful therapies. As the king was in such a wretched state, someone who had heard talk about the skill of Democedes reported this to Darius and the king summoned him immediately. Democedes, being brought in rags and fetters before the king, was reluctant to admit his healing abilities, fearing that as a skilled physician he might never be allowed to return to Greece. Pretending that he had very little knowledge of the art of healing, he tended the king nevertheless and by applying mild remedies in contrast to the former violent means and using Hellenic drugs he managed to cure the king. The king in his gratefulness bestowed gold, a house in Susa, and honors on Democedes, but did not allow him to leave Persia. After healing the king’s wife Atossa, who suffered from a “tumor,” and gaining her goodwill, Democedes managed to be sent on a mission to Greece, which he used to escape the power of King Darius.

A Companion to the Achaemenid Persian Empire, Volume II, First Edition.

Edited by Bruno Jacobs and Robert Rollinger.

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Considering the lack of Persian written documents on medicine, the information, which is regularly used to shed light on physicians in the Persian Empire, comes exclusively from extraneous, especially Greek sources, like this account of Herodotus. Naturally, the Greek writers concentrated on the foreign physicians at the royal court and related stories about Greek physicians and their colleagues and rivals from Egypt, showing – more often than not – a clear bias for their countrymen. The elaborated story of Democedes plainly shows that Herodotus strived to illustrate the superior medical knowledge and healing abilities of the Greek physician, who even used “Greek drugs” in healing, over that of the Egyptian court physicians of Darius (cf. Griffiths 1987; Lopez 2020). However, at the same time the story shows that the Egyptian physicians were considered to be top of class at that time, especially by the Persian kings like Darius, who “had been accustomed to keep about him those of the Egyptians who were accounted the first in the art of medicine” (3.129). King Cyrus II had already “sent to [the Egyptian pharaoh] Amasis and asked him for a physician of the eyes, whosoever was the best of those in Egypt” (3.1) and Cambyses appointed the Egyptian Udjahorresnet to the office of chief physician. Later, King Darius sent the same Udjahorresnet back to Egypt to restore the “Houses of Life,” the centers of knowledge (Burkard 1994: pp. 42–46; Weinberg 1999; Huber 2006; Wasmuth 2020).

However, the Persian kings seemed to have developed a taste for Greek physicians (Brosius 2011). According to Ctesias, Apollonides of Cos, an island famed for its physicians, was court physician at Artaxerxes I’s court. We do not learn much about actual medical deeds of Apollonides, apart from healing the wounds of the king’s brother-in-law Megazybus, who was hurt when fighting for Artaxerxes. Becoming a medical adviser to the family, Apollonides later fell in love with Megazybus’ wife Amytis, as well known for her beauty as for her extramarital affairs. When Amytis told her mother about the affair, Apollonides was kept in chains and later buried alive (Tuplin 2004).¹

Ctesias himself, who belonged to the Cnidian school of physicians, lived by his own account for several years at Artaxerxes II’s court and upon his return authored a history of Persia. Photius notes that he was the doctor of Parysatis, the king’s mother (*Myriobiblon* 72.29), but he obviously also accompanied the king into action (cf. however Dorati 2011). During the battle at Cunaxa he tended the king, claiming that he healed the chest wound the king had received from his brother, Cyrus the younger (Xen. *Anab.* 1.8) (Cf. Bichler 2009). For a physician, Ctesias, surprisingly, does not relate much in his *persiká* concerning illnesses, plagues, medical problems, and his healing practices; he seems rather interested in politics, diplomatic missions, and court intrigues, conspicuously often stressing his own role in these.²

It is no surprise that the accuracy of Ctesias’ report has been questioned many times, and there is a strong line of criticism, which started in ancient times. Modern

scholarship has used these reports in the absence of other sources to get some ideas of physicians and medicine at the Persian court, but since Felix Jacoby's fundamental critique of Ctesias' credibility (Jacoby 1922) there is also a reluctance to use these reports of Ctesias and Herodotus for historical reconstruction.³ It has been stressed that these narratives are not relatively faithful accounts of personal experience, even if styled as such, but rather historical novels, scandal stories, or ethnographic light reading containing many factual errors. Furthermore, it has been surmised that neither Herodotus nor Ctesias had ever been to Persia or the Orient. Indeed, we must be extremely careful not to judge Persian court medicine according to the picture drawn by Ctesias or Herodotus alone. The view we would have of Babylonian medicine on the sole basis of Herodotus' rather peculiar portrayal (*Histories* 1.197), had we no correction of this description by the large corpus of cuneiform medical documents, might serve as a warning example (Waters 2017).

However, these narratives cannot be completely dismissed as historical sources. Even admitted that they were written to amuse a Greek readership and assign more importance to an entertainment value than to accuracy, they still illustrate how the Persian court was portrayed to a Greek audience. In order to gain credibility such narratives had to build on previous knowledge and experience concerning the careers of physicians and court life. One point that both Herodotus and Ctesias are stressing is the presence of Egyptian and Greek physicians at the Persian court. The habit of kings to summon foreign experts, especially those of medical lore, to their courts is a tradition going back at least roughly a thousand years to the time of the diplomatic relationship between the great kings of Egypt, Babylonia, and Hatti in the fourteenth to thirteenth century BCE, when the Hittite kings called Egyptian and Babylonian healers to their capital Hattuša and kept them by offering gold, status, houses, and even spouses from the royal family.⁴ It is therefore entirely within the expected historical framework that Egyptian and Greek physicians lived and worked at the Persian court, partly tempted by wealth and status, partly staying involuntarily either as prisoners of war or, once arrived, simply lacking the means for a return.

And yet, the question remains: What about the native Persian physicians and their knowledge of medicine? Though the Greek sources are certainly more interested in the stories of their countrymen and their struggle at the court, they mention occasionally that medical expertise in general, not only its Greek and Egyptian form, was highly valued at the court. Xenophon reports not only in detail the dialogue between Cyrus and his father Cambyses on medical matters (*Cyr.* 1.6.15–16), but also remarks that Cyrus “spared no expense to collect about him the very best physicians and surgeons and all the instruments and drugs and articles of food and drink that any one of them said would be useful” (*Cyr.* 8.2.24). Briant (2002: p. 267; see also Gray 2020) assumes that this passage might allude to the *magi*, the “Persian priests” as they were called by the Greeks, to whom an ancient and esoteric knowledge is attributed. And

indeed, the *magi* were well versed with drugs and their healing abilities, as especially Pliny the Elder testifies. For example, Pliny describes the plant *theombrotion*, which the kings of Persia drank “for all bodily disorders and for instability of intellect and of the sense of justice” (NH 24.162). While this pharmacological knowledge of the *magi* shows that they were in some form or another involved in medicine, their expertise went well beyond that. They used herbs for other purposes as well, such as “to gain power to divine,” to get access to the inner circle of the royal court, for success of “petitioners to the king,” and “when they wished to call up gods.” Furthermore, they attributed, as the Babylonians did before them, certain powers to stones and used them to heal epilepsy or to “fight violence and hot temper or witchcraft.” The *magi* were responsible for the correct worship of the gods, reading the stars, communication with the divine, and observance of the proper carrying out of rites. In short, their task was to ensure mankind’s alignment with the divine will.

The *magi* exerted a strong fascination on the Hellenistic world (de Jong 1997). At the same time admired for their rumored powers and polemically disparaged for their trust in “magical” beliefs, the ambiguity of their craft intrigued commentators. Their reputed aptitude to manipulate nature, the divine, or mankind eventually led to the association of these powers with their name, while the dubious nature of their craft gave “magic” a mesmerizing yet distinctly pejorative meaning in classical antiquity. So strong was the connection of the Persians with magic that Zoroaster himself was attributed as the inventor of magic (see Pliny, NH 30.1.2). However, it was the Persian *magus* Ostanes to whom the dissemination of magical art is attributed. According to Pliny, Ostanes “accompanied Xerxes, the Persian king, in his expedition against Greece. It was he who first disseminated, as it were, the germs of this monstrous art, and tainted therewith all parts of the world through which the Persians passed” (Pliny, NH 30.1.2). Later, as Diogenes Laertius remarks, he settled with other *magi* at Abdera, where he taught his craft to Greek philosophers like Democritus, who in turn became the source for Pliny’s knowledge of the *magi*.

In this certainly distorted picture of the *magi* to be gained from classical sources, enough vestiges survive that remind us strongly of Assyrian and Babylonian scholars, the famed *ummânū* “scholars” of the Assyrian and Babylonian kings,⁵ whose magical and mythological powers became legendary in their own culture. The overlap of “magical” expertise is indeed striking; like the *magi* the Babylonian and Assyrian scholars before them excelled in the art of healing, astrology, alchemy, divination, influencing the gods and their decisions by rituals, prayers and incantations, uses of stones, plants and trees in medicine and “magic,” etc. Given these similarities, it is reasonable to assume that by analyzing the tasks, the rank, and the social environment of Assyrian court physicians, we might illustrate the life of Persian healers at the royal court, and furnish a contrast to the Greek and Roman view of Persian medicine.

Luckily, the royal archives and libraries at the late Assyrian capital Nineveh provide ample evidence for the physicians and the practice of medicine, as not only medical texts but also letters and royal administrative texts survive in great numbers, detailing many aspects of court life. At the Assyrian court two professions pursued the medical craft, the physicians (*asû*) and the “exorcists” (*āšipû*). While the physicians practiced exclusively the art of healing, the exorcists were specialists for the delicate relationship between mankind and the divine sphere and dealt with the ramifications of a disturbed relationship, which inter alia might result in sickness and disease. As many diseases were thought to be caused by the gods and the gods played an essential role in removing the disease from the body of the patient, the exorcist was a leading participant in curing the sick. While these professions could be consulted on their own, many examples show that they regularly worked together as in the letter from the priest Urad-Nabû of the city of Kalḫu to the king: “I am sick. (...) Let him (=the king) appoint one exorcist and one physician to attend me and they shall treat me together” (Cole and Machinist 1998: p. 66, r.11'–13'). We do not know if this king answered this plea, but he would certainly not have sent his very own physicians and exorcists.⁶ These he kept close to him, so that they would be ready if needed, and they had to apply for a leave as did Urad-Nanaya, the chief physician of King Esarhaddon around the year 670 BCE. “As to what the king, my lord, wrote to me: ‘is it (true that) you have been concerned about yourself?’ – when am I ever free? I took care of (the crown prince) Aššur-mukin-paleya, and as soon as I saw him healthy (again), I came for the health of the king! Now, O king, my lord, I should be released for a full month, (for) I must do something – otherwise I shall die!” (Parpola 1993: p. 320 r.6–s.18; the following references are all from Parpola 1993). And indeed, judging by the tone of the letters that he and other healers sent to or received from the king, to be court physician did not seem to have been a career of leisure and relaxation. The chief court physician was the healer of the whole royal family, not the king alone. He also tended to the queen mother (200–201, 244, 297), the king’s wives, the adult crown-prince (191–193), the king’s children and grandchildren (213–214), even from a newborn age (293, 301–302, 305). Frequently the healer had to stay awake with his patient all night (215, 310, 329, and 335), sometimes even by the command of the king (329). The kinds of diseases and medical problems depicted in the letters ranged from symptoms like ejecting bile (217), nosebleed (321–322), ear problems (323–324), chest problems (310), fever (320), skin alterations (318), abscesses (319), and diseases like diarrhea (326) or epilepsy (309) to psychological conditions (316). However, the royal family contacted them also in less serious cases, like the teething problems of a baby (302) or simple seasonal colds (236).

The healers applied various methods and medications to treat their patients: medical plants, herbs, or seeds were prescribed and in most cases bandages, potions, tampons, etc. (compare *inter alia* 302 and 335). Often the medication is reported in full detail to the king, for example: “The baby is much better. I fastened an absorptive dressing on this abscess behind his ear, it rested loosely against its tip. Yesterday evening I opened the lint by which it was attached and removed the dressing on it. There was pus as much as the tip of (one’s) little finger on the dressing” (319 o.8–r.8).

The king and his family seemed to have been quite problematic patients. At least, the letters show a tendency of the healers to exculpate themselves by delivering a kind of activities report. Obviously, they feared to be blamed for absence of a successful treatment and to be accused of failure to act. The healer Ikkaru ended a report on a patient who showed no progress with the words: “The king, my lord, should know that he is ill; the kings should not find fault with us later on. I have applied two or three lotions, (but) he has not seen any improvement” (329 r.2–10). King Esarhaddon was straightforward in his accusations asking “Why do you not diagnose the nature of my illness and bring about its cure?” (315 o.8–10), and in another letter a physician is accused of dishonesty concerning a patient of his and has to explain himself to the king (333 o.8–r.13). The Assyrian physicians, probably like their colleagues at all times, had to cope with wisecracks, and the kings were not above remarks in a know-it-all manner like the one the exorcist Urad-Gula had to read in a letter from his king in reply to a sent prescription: “‘Fall of the heavens’ What is this? The heavens exist forever!” (295 o.11–12). Obviously, the king was not aware that “fall of the heavens” was a fairly common name for a disease. Once the illness was overcome and the patient recovered, the physicians did not claim the merit for it, but hastened to assure the king that the gods, and especially the king’s personal protective spirit, deserved the praise as they had effected the recovery.⁷ The court physician depended completely on the, sometimes capricious, favor of the king. Salary complaints were not infrequent,⁸ and the life of a formerly eminent scholar could become horrible after a fall from grace as is movingly described in the highly literary and sophisticated letter of Urad-Gula to king Assurbanipal (see 294, compare also 383). On the other hand a high position at the court practically guaranteed a considerable income and these positions were very much sought after. It is no wonder that the scholars not only competed for the best positions but also tried by deal making to get places at the court for their sons, relatives, and pupils, or for the scholar’s brother (308). This tendency resulted, at least at times, in the most important scholarly positions at the court being concentrated within one family.⁹

The picture that becomes apparent through these letters can surely be transferred to the medical scholars at the court of the Late Babylonian kings, and

probably to that of the Persian court. Although we have no direct evidence for this, it might be assumed that some of the well-educated Babylonian scholars of Nebuchadnezzar's and Nabonidus' time ended up at the Persian court, whether they were sent by their king, deported following the Persian conquest of Babylonia, or simply followed the money – similar to their Egyptian colleagues. To what extent this Babylonian knowledge eventually influenced the *magi* is a matter of speculation.

The end of Babylonian independence and the fact that the royal court resided in Babylonia no more was surely a sincere blow to the Babylonian scholars, for their worldview as well as in pecuniary terms. They no longer “kept the watch of the king” (Parpola 1993: p. XXI), that is they no longer cared for all the needs of the king in his relationship to the gods. However, this did not mean that all Babylonian medical knowledge became obsolete; on the contrary, Babylonian scholarship thrived under Persian rule albeit on a more private level. The tablets forming the library of a family of exorcists in Uruk bear witness to the continued activity of Babylonian healers in the fifth century BCE. The texts were written by one Šamaš-iddin and his sons Rīmūt-Ani and Anu-ikšur, members of the family Šangî-Ninurta (Frahm 2002; Robson 2014, pp. 155–158). An overview of the library of this family immediately shows their predilection for texts concerning healing (Oelsner 1996: p. 440; Clancier 2010: pp. 400–406): Diagnostic texts, used to identify diseases and their divine senders, therapeutic texts containing prescriptions with details concerning the preparation of medical substances, commentaries on different medical texts, and manuscripts of the incantations series *Maqlû*, *Bīt rimki* and *Bīt mēseri*. Among these are many copies of texts and text series that originated many centuries before and were handed down in the “stream of tradition” of copied and re-copied texts through generations of scholars. Manuscripts of the therapeutic texts series illustrate the use of these texts, already extant in copies from the so-called “Assurbanipal's library” in Nineveh from the middle of the seventh century BCE. Numerous are the copies of tablets of the medical diagnostic text series, going back to the edition of the Babylonian scholar Esagil-kīn-apli in the eleventh century BCE. Many commentaries to these two medical text series, which among them contain the greater part of the traditional Babylonian medical knowledge, testify to the intellectual penetration of this knowledge by members of the Šangî-Ninurta-family. Notwithstanding this respect for the traditional texts of Babylonian medical lore, the family was also interested in new medical insights and discoveries. This can be shown on the one hand by their exploring the possibilities of the at that time newly invented zodiac for astrological medicine, as exemplified by a text which combines certain stones, plants, and trees with “magical” substances, the calendrical date, and the zodiac (Heeßel 2005). On the other hand a small list written by Anu-ikšur and assigning 31 well-known

diseases as originating in one of the four organs heart, stomach, lungs, and kidneys, exemplifies for the first time an interest in a bodily explanation for the origin of a disease, instead of seeking a divine sender for it (Köcher 1978; Geller 2001/2002: p. 61). This completely new diagnostic approach, which is not encountered in earlier texts, shows not only the medical interest of Anu-ikšur but highlights the cultural dynamics of the time.

While this library provides us with a fairly detailed insight into the professional lore of Babylonian healers in Persian times, unfortunately only very few texts illuminate the personal circumstances of the members of the Šangî-Ninurta family. Surely – as other families of scholars before and after them did – they worked in a freelance fashion as healers for local private persons. However, it is still uncertain whether they also held offices at a temple and received prebends, as did their colleague Iqīšâ, prominent member of the Ekur-zakir-family of exorcists, who lived and worked in Uruk some generations later in early Hellenistic times. Still, the library of the Šangî-Ninurta family is a striking example both for the continuity of local healing traditions and for a continuous development of these traditions that took place in the satrapies of the Persian Empire.

NOTES

- 1 The story of Apollonides, told in Ctesias' *History of Persia* book 17/18, as recounted by Phoetius is edited by Jacoby (1958): p. 467, F 14 paragraph 44 and for translations see Llewellyn-Jones and Robson (2010): pp. 190–191 and Stronk (2010): p. 345.
- 2 However, Tuplin (2004) argues in favour of Ctesias' "inclusion of specific medical material."
- 3 For recent criticism of Ctesias' historical reliability in general see Bichler (2004); Bleckmann (2007) and Dorati (2011). Davies (2010) radically questions the historicity of Democedes and sees this physician as a literary fiction.
- 4 The topic of Egyptian healers at the Hittite court has been treated by Edel (1976) and compare Zaccagnini (1983): pp. 250–255. See also Heeßel (2009) and Devechi and Sibbing-Plantholt (2020) for the story of a Babylonian physician who was summoned to Ḫattuša and became the topic of a letter from the Hittite king Ḫattušili to the Babylonian king Kadašman-Enlil.
- 5 See Briant (2002): p. 268: "We have the impression that at the Achaemenid court the magi took responsibility for the knowledge, practices, and prestige that at the Neo-Assyrian Court had been the province of the Sages and the Literati ('Assyrian scholars'), who were divided into scribes, haruspices, exorcists, doctors, and singers."
- 6 In Parpola (1993): p. 222 the exorcist Adad-šumu-ušur reports on a seemingly non-royal patient that he had been commanded by the king to visit. This visit quite likely took place within Nineveh.

- 7 See Parpola (1993): p. 333 r.12–3: “Thanks to the (personal) god and the (personal) protective spirit of the king, my lord, he got well.” Similarly expressed in Parpola (1993): p. 337 r.4.
- 8 Compare Parpola (1993): p. 289 with the remark in r.15’–17’ that already the scholars of the king’s predecessor were “left empty-handed”, see also Parpola (1993): p. 182.
- 9 This is particularly apparent in the descendants of the well-known scholar Nabû-zuqup-kēnu from Kalḫu, who was active during the reigns of the kings Sargon and Sennacherib, as they held important and influential positions at the royal court at Nineveh. Of the “inner circle” (see Parpola 1993: p. XXVI table I) of the kings Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal, numbering around 17 scholars, 4 were supplied by this family alone. Nabû-zukup-kēnu’s son Nabû-zēru-lēšir was king Esarhaddon’s chief scribe and ummānu, his personal and therefore most important scholar, while his brother Adad-šumu-ušur was the king’s exorcist. Nabû-zēru-lēšir’s son Ištar-šumu-ereš followed in his father’s footsteps and also became the king’s chief scribe and ummānu, while Adad-šumu-ušur’s son Urad-Gula like his father became an important exorcist at the court, even though he later fell into disgrace.

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CHAPTER 93

Techniques of Art and Architecture

Alexander Nagel

With few notable exceptions, approaches to buildings constructed and materials manufactured in the Achaemenid Persian Empire heartland have focused on reconstructing finished products and buildings on paper, in architectural models, and more recently in virtual realities, neglecting to study the very process of construction and manufacture itself. At the same time, modern authoritative surveys, also for adjacent regions, cover developments in crafting and architectural techniques in the Achaemenid Empire only randomly, if at all (e.g. more recently, Moorey 1985 and 1994; Landels 2000; Gara 2003; Wright 2000–2009; Palyvou and Tasios 2006; Cuomo 2007; Rihhl 2009; Cech 2011). Museum exhibitions and accompanying catalogs, with few exceptions, tend to focus on the exceptional esthetics and beauty of objects created for the Achaemenid Elite, but provide little information on their manufacture (e.g. Stöllner et al. 2004; Curtis and Tallis 2005; Rehm 2006). Handbooks on post-Achaemenid technological developments in the region avoid looking back to more ancient traditions, and leading theoretically-minded scholars working on ancient technologies do not refer to Achaemenid Persia in their works. A much-needed conversation bridging regionally-focused studies and sub-disciplines like archaeometry, conservation studies, and science will be necessary to overcome our limited understanding of the state of technological knowledge and production in the Achaemenid Persian Empire, to develop the *concept* of researching technologies.

By contrast, every aspect of daily life was connected to a set of acquired technological knowledge and methods of engineering. A wealth of tablets and

archives available from the heartlands in Fars and Mesopotamia, but also texts from other sites (e.g. papyri from Elephantine), provides excellent evidence for names and movements of craftsmen, professions, building, and manufacturing activities. These texts as well as artisans' and fitters' marks on preserved monuments provide significant information about craftsmen and technological knowledge. To illustrate the importance of an integrated multidisciplinary approach, one example should suffice. Research on the fourth-century BCE miners who did not survive an earthquake in a salt mine near modern Chehrabad in northwest Iran is crucial for our understanding of the socio-economic role of, and the technologies applied in, the Achaemenid period. Analysis suggests that the miners had traveled some distance to collect salt, and tools such as an iron pick or a simple hammer with a wooden handle provide evidence for how miners practiced pillar and chamber mining (Aali et al. 2012a,b; Pollard et al. 2008; Ramaroli et al. 2010: p. 352; Vahdati et al. 2019). The young miners wore leather and carried objects made from animal skin, such as belts and bags, used fabrics like fur and wool for ropes and other materials (Aali et al. 2012a: p. 73, 2012b, 2016). Research is ongoing, and one of the highlights in exploring technologies using a multidisciplinary approach.

Skilled craftsmen from all over the empire manufactured a multitude of objects from materials, and will have shared knowledge on materials and technologies. To be sure, elites were linked horizontally over very large territorial spaces, but so were craftsmen and traditions. It can be argued that the constant move of the court of the Great Kings spurred and balanced out local and regional developments in technology, and an amalgam of new techniques (and craftsmen) adapted from the conquered and occupied territories was brought in. Just like today, technological development was a practical answer to a demand. In addition, there is a diffusion of materials and techniques from periphery to core and back, and then to other peripheries: Ogden (2000: pp. 163, 168) argued that iron weapons and the technology of gold refining were mainly introduced to Egypt with the advent of Achaemenid Persians; Hellner (2006) reports on increased imports of bitumen from the Caspian Sea or Mesopotamia to Greece. Such diffusions are especially visible in the use of Egyptian and Mesopotamian technologies in the Achaemenid heartlands (Amiet 2013: p. 333: "a form of Egyptomania"), making clear that technological development is in an ambivalent relationship with changes in the political sphere. Today, there are few pictorial representations of technical process available for the Achaemenid Persian period (e.g. Lefebvre 1924), unlike for other periods or cultures on the periphery (e.g. Zimmer 1982; Ulrich 2008). This overview is necessarily brief and incomplete.

Ceramics and Firing Techniques

Ceramic products came in many different shapes and techniques: handmade and wheel-made, glazed and unglazed, painted and decorated with applied motifs or incisions in the outer surfaces. Fired ceramics were made for various purposes, as containers for consumption and storage, but also as pipe lines (e.g. Mousavi 2012: pp. 33–34 Fig. 1.16) and lamps (e.g. Stronach 1978: p. 185). As a rule, the raw clays were often sourced nearby. Most ceramics were wheel-made, and potters will have moved with demand as they did in more recent times (Wulff 1966: pp. 136–160). Our knowledge about any technological development in firing technologies during the 200 years of Achaemenid rule is still limited (McRae 2014; Petrie 2012). Potters' signatures at Persepolis, however, indicate an awareness in status of the profession (Atai 2004a,b).

The study of kiln production and technologies used during the Achaemenid period has barely begun as most of the kilns excavated in Iran date from earlier or later periods (Alden 1978; Askari Chaverdi 2012: pp. 232–234, 240; Stronach 1978: p. 147). A distinctive “Red,” “Gray” and “Cream Ware” was in use at Persepolis, the amount of “Cream Ware” increases toward the very end of the period. The most diagnostic late Achaemenid pottery type is storage vessel sherds with ribbed decorations varying in shape and interval (Adachi and Zeidi 2009; Askari Chaverdi and Callieri 2012: p. 245). Excavations at and near Persepolis brought to light fragments of thin-walled vessels (Atai 2004a,b; Askari Chaverdi and Callieri 2012: pp. 242–243). Fragments of the so-called egg-shell ware, discovered at the Shaour palace in the Susiana (Boucharlat and Labrousse 1979 fig. 29.1–2), were excavated in large quantities at Achaemenid Babylonia (Fleming 1989) and at a kiln site at Ur (Wooley 1962: p. 50). Other evidence seems to suggest that carinated bowls were considered a typical shape (Boucharlat and Haerinck 1991: p. 302).

Recent studies by Martinez-Sève (2002), Menegazzi (2015: pp. 8–22, 49–58; cp. Moorey 2000), and Klengel-Brandt and Cholidis (2006) on first-millennium BCE coroplastic products have established general outlines of the technology in use for the production of thousands of figurines throughout the empire. It appears that coroplastic products made both from single molds and by hand were common. Menegazzi (2015: p. 8) notes that terracotta figurines manufactured from multiple molds appear only in the post-Achaemenid period. The most common type, the “Persian horse rider,” was generally formed by hand. Painted ceramic vessels in the shape of rhyta and fragments thereof from Susa and elsewhere complicate our current understanding of the work of the entangled technological processes involving both the coroplast and the potter.

Mudbrick Architecture

Sun-dried and fired mudbricks were the predominant building materials. Of the many mudbrick walls from Susa and Persepolis which were either dismantled or leveled down during early excavations, those still standing provide unique insights into the technology of brick production (e.g. Hesse 2010). A significant amount of bricks was needed for building structures throughout the Middle East (e.g. Sauvage 1998). It has been estimated that more than 200 000 fired mudbricks were manufactured for the foundations of the palace structures at Susa in the late sixth century BCE alone, with another 100 000 fired bricks needed for the pavements of the courts and esplanades on the site (Perrot 2013). The individual bricks had a standard size of 33×33 cm, yet recent excavations at Tol-e Ajori revealed that other sizes were common, too (32×32 cm: Askari Chaverdi et al. 2013). The fact that a great number of fired and glazed bricks bear artisans' marks, either painted or stamped (Koldewey 1914: pp. 104–105 Fig. 65; Boucharlat and Labrousse 1979: pp. 61–67 and 99 fig. 24; Caubet and Daucé 2013; Maras 2010; Askari Chaverdi et al. 2013: pp. 19–22; Askari Chaverdi et al. 2016; Askari Chaverdi et al. 2017; Amadori et al. 2018), proves the sophisticated ways of organizing the labor. Brick bonding techniques were basic. Between bricks, bituminous waterproof mortar was used early in the Achaemenid period (Yousefnejad 2016; Marzahn 2008: p. 139).

Archaeometric studies suggest that the raw materials for the bricks at Susa stem from local sources (Ruben and Trichet 1980). Throughout Khuzestan and Fars, the best clay sources would be found at marshes, riverbeds, and wetlands. The clay would have been churned and leant with a chaff, laid out in simple wooden frames – none of which is preserved – and dried in the sun for only a short time to avoid bursting or breaking (De Lapérouse 2019). Some bricks included coarse particles of quartz with fused feldspar and clay (Tite and Shortland 2004). It has been estimated that a single experienced brick-maker and his assistant could produce more than 3000 mudbricks in one day (Delougaz 1933: pp. 6–7).

At Susa, some walls at the Apadana were 5.20 m thick, and may have reached a height between 12 and 20 m, with 4–15 bricks in horizontal layers (Ladiray and Perrot 2013: p. 172). At the monumental gate at Karacamirli, Azerbaijan, the outer walls were four bricks (1.50 m) thick, the inner walls still three bricks with half-bricks facilitating the bonding of the bricks (Knauss et al. 2010: p. 112).

Many facades of residential buildings were covered with stunning glazed brick facades (Caubet and Daucé 2013; Schmidt 1953: pp. 77–78; Koldewey 1931 pl. 39; Haerinck 1997: pp. 29–30; Marzahn 2008: pp. 156–158). It has long been recognized that the Zagros mountain people had a

long tradition in glazed brick decoration (Paynter and Tite 2001; Caubet 2007, 2010; Malekzadeh 2001; Daucé 2018). Most of the evidence for the Achaemenid period comes from the vast number of glazed bricks reused in post-Achaemenid walls and floors on the Susa royal residencies area, flat and in relief. More recently, Caubet and Kaczmarczyk (1998), Caubet and Daucé (2013), Holakooei (2013 and 2016 on opacifiers), and others have studied the technologies behind the colorful finished glazed bricks. Maras (2010) distinguished at least eight steps in the process. These steps included a repeated exposure to fire. Often, the designs were outlined with a black paste before receiving the paints and the final glaze. The glazes were manufactured by mixing plant ashes and quartz. The green color of the glazes was the result of a combination of copper oxide and yellow lead antimonite particles (Tite and Shortland 2004: p. 389). The strong blue hues were mainly achieved by using a combination of cobalt, copper, and iron (Dayton and Dayton 1978: p. 383; Fitz 1982; Jung and Hauptmann 2004: pp. 388–392). The surface of the glazed bricks to be used in walls was made in a wedged shape with a slipped surface on the outer side (Razmjou 2004: p. 385 Fig. 3). Signs on the upper side marked the position and organization of the individual bricks.

Other brick walls of many Achaemenid buildings were covered with plaster (Matson 1953: p. 285). In some cases, the plaster layer was covered with green paint serving as a ground layer for further decoration (e.g. Ladiray and Perrot 2010: p. 190; Aloiz et al. 2016). Fragments with traces of blue and red paints excavated at Susa indicate further finishes of interior walls, and fragments of wall paintings were also discovered at Dahan-e Golaman (Nagel 2010).

Stone

As elsewhere in the ancient world, stone quarries were sometimes located close to the sites (Oudbashi 2008; Arnold 1991; Waelkens et al. 1992; Korres 1995, 2000; Nolte 2005; Koukouvou 2012). Aspects of the provenance, quarrying and transportation of stone in the Achaemenid heartlands have been studied by Krefter (1967, 1971), Tilia (1968, 1972, 1978), Nylander (1970: pp. 56–58, 2006), Calmeyer (1990), Huff (2004), Emami (2005, 2012, 2018), and Kasiri et al. (2020). The limestone for the palaces at Susa was brought from the Kabir Kuh mountains, c. 50 km east of Susa (DSf 12). The white sandstone for the palaces of Pasargadae had to be transported from the Kuh-i Almaz c. 50 km away, southwest of Pasargadae near the modern village of Sivand (Tilia 1968: pp. 68–69; Emami 2012, 2018). Distances were mastered by transportation over the Karkheh and Dez rivers near Susa and the Pulvar river in Fars (Perrot and Ladiray 2013: p. 206; Sami 1966: p. 22). Elsewhere in the empire, we know stones were quarried sometimes far

from the side (Kasiri et al. 2020). We learn about locals quarrying millstones along the Euphrates river, shaping them, and transporting them to Babylon (Xen. Anab. 1.5.5).

In Fars, scholars identified a great number of stone quarries; in the Marvdasht area around Persepolis, more than 20 alone (Zare 2004; Emami 2012: p. 130). Intense quarrying activities happened along the Kuh-e Rahmat and near Naqsh-e Rostam (Boucharlat et al. 2012: p. 268 and Fig. 21; Kleiss 2015). Recent petrographic analysis enables us to identify the provenance of stones used at Persepolis from the local quarries in much more detail (Zare 2004). Blocks prepared in the Sivand mountain mines could reach an average height of c. 9–12 m (Emami 2012: p. 181). While there is evidence for Greek inscriptions in a mine near Persepolis, it is only from Ptolemaic Egypt that we hear from those working in the quarries, and an *architekton* is attested in papyri (Bouche-Leclercq 1908; Cuomo 2008: pp. 20–21).

The unfinished gate and details on unfinished stone carvings at Persepolis offer interesting insights into the production process of stone working on the site (Tilia 1968: p. 18). Both hammer and chisel were used. Two iron tools, each c. 15 cm long, belonging “perhaps to an Achaemenian stonemason,” were excavated near one of the tombs east of the Persepolis terrace (Tilia 1968: pp. 69–71). A layer of thick ochre pigments was used to join and fit individual blocks (Nylander 1970: pp. 37–38; Rhazmjou 2005: p. 309). Individual blocks were held together by clamps (Nylander 1966), often in the shape of swallowtails (Shahbazi 2004: p. 228 Fig. 191). Roaf (1983) discussed how repetitive scenes on the Apadana appear to have been crafted by specialized workshops, and recent investigations allow us to reconstruct the final stages before paint was applied (Askari Chaverdi et al. 2016; Ridolfi et al. 2019).

On the Takht of Persepolis, on the facades of the tombs of the Achaemenid rulers, as well as on other sites, architectural elements and sculptures were repaired during the Achaemenid period (Tilia 1968, 1969a,b, 1978; Nagel and Rahsaz 2010; Luschey 1968: p. 83; Boucharlat 2010: p. 393 Fig. 453). At the same time, stone statues of Achaemenid rulers, animals, and deities were erected in and outside of building structures in Persepolis (statue of Xerxes), Mesopotamian Sippar (Rollinger 2011: pp. 44–46: statue of Darius from the first year of Xerxes), Susa (the famous statue of Darius; here Figure 94.8), and elsewhere. All relief sculptures were originally painted, in some cases gilded or inlaid with metals or semi-precious materials (Nagel 2013, 2019). Details on the sculptures were stippled with a toothed chisel to prepare them for paint (Nylander 1965, 1970: p. 28). Fine incised lines attested on several reliefs served as further guidelines for the painters (Tilia 1978). Fragments of animal horns and other materials of various blue compositions have been excavated in great numbers at Persepolis and Susa (e.g. Schmidt 1953: p. 269; Dadashzadeh et al. 2017). Painters’ activities are revealed by the many bowls

containing pigments as well as the pellets and lumps of pigments in Persepolis, some found in secure contexts associated directly with the monuments (Nagel 2013).

Achaemenid Persia craftsmen exploited stones for other purposes. Stone boxes contained more precious items (Curtis and Tallis 2005: p. 57 No. 3), and inscriptions were set up (e.g. Curtis and Tallis 2005: p. 57 No. 5). Stones were used in the production of stamp and cylinder seals, for tableware and in other functions (Curtis and Tallis 2005: p. 219 No. 387). We have a good understanding of the work of the seal-carver, and epigraphic sources inform us about the training of a seal carver in Achaemenid Mesopotamia (Marzahn 1997: p. 33; Wartke 1997).

It is likely that rock façade carvings were created with a combination of building constructions made from wood or other materials and ropes to help the craftsmen (e.g. Tomb of Darius I: Nagel and Rahsaz 2010).

Timber

Unfortunately, timber technologies are still among the least studied technologies of Achaemenid art and technology. Once used in the superstructure but also during construction process, as furniture and in bridges (Rollinger 2013), few wooden specimens have been studied scientifically. Fragments of wooden architecture and a set of wooden pillars covered with plaster survived at Persepolis and in the palaces below the Persepolis platform (Tilia 1972: p. 245; Tadjvidi 1976). Generally, wooden furniture with complex fittings in other materials is well attested for other sites and earlier centuries of the first millennium BCE (e.g. Schauensee 2011a). Aspects of the manufacturing of wooden architecture have been studied in other parts of the empire, particularly in the west (e.g. Kienlin 2009), and can in part be reconstructed by comparing materials in the provinces from decades earlier (Simpson 2010). Timber was transported over long distances. Following the comments given by Darius in his foundation records from Susa (DSf), after the cutting of the woods in Lebanon, hundreds of trunks at least 20 m in length for the beams of the Apadana must have been transported over 1.500 km. Other types of wood were brought from Kerman for window and door structures at Susa (Perrot 2013: p. 468). At Persepolis, double leaved doors allowing entrance to the major buildings were made of wood, in more important buildings covered with metal sheets (e.g. Curtis and Tallis 2005: p. 97 No. 84). Wooden sculptures are mentioned in the Persepolis Treasury Tablets (Roaf 1989). Future research will be based on recent investigations on timber in the palaces of Sasanian Fars, where Mediterranean cypress was still a predominant material used (Djamali et al. 2017).

Glass

Although glass has been excavated in multiple contexts and structures from the Achaemenid period in Iran and elsewhere, no detailed study based on the excavated examples exists. Ignatidou (2010) has investigated colorless glass finds from the western parts of the empire. Next to finds from major sites like Susa, Persepolis, and Pasargadae and Babylon, glass finds stem mainly from tombs; however, few of them have been analyzed (Matson 1953). A rod-formed glass kohl tube was excavated in an Achaemenid period tomb at Gilan (Haerinck 1989: pp. 458–459). Similar rod-formed glass kohl tubes, amphoriskoi, and glass phialai have been excavated in Georgia (Gagosidze and Saginasvili 2000; Knauss 2005: p. 207 Fig. 4). Such glass kohl tubes are known from Nimrud (Barag et al. 1970: p. 156 Fig. 47), and their manufacture has been investigated in recent years (e.g. Giberson 2002). There is debate about the proper modern labeling of glass in “Achaemenid style” excavated in the western provinces (e.g. Jones 2002; Triantafyllidis 2003; Ignatidou 2010). An Achaemenid Persian glass seal was excavated in modern Bahrain (Potts 2012: p. 525 Fig. 49.2).

Earlier sites in Iran provide some evidence for local glass production testifying to a highly advanced state of glassmaking in the first half of the first millennium BCE (Stapleton 2011). Raw materials included sand, chalk, soda, or potash. After melting to become frit, the materials were pulverized again and melted (Eickstedt 2008). Traces of kilns, together with red glass ingots and slag, were excavated at Nimrud and other sites in the Middle East (Barag 1985: pp. 108–109; Curtis and Tallis 2005: p. 180).

Textile and Textile Productions

There is a growing body of scientific literature on the production of textiles, textile factories, weaving, tanning, and dye production in the ancient world (e.g. Loftus 2000; Gillis and Nosch 2007; Völling 2008; Alfaro Giner 2008; Michel and Nosch 2010; Good 2012; Herz 2012; Tzachili and Zimi 2012). At the same time, the archeology of textiles has become an increasingly specialized discipline (Wild 1988; Good 2001; Kunow 2011). Few loom weights have been excavated in Achaemenid Persian contexts and there is no study of types and distribution available at this point. Yet archeological evidence for textiles and footwear for the Achaemenid period has increased following up earlier reviews by Böhmer and Thompson (1991) and Kawami (1992). Weavers are attested among the group of textile workers in the Neo-Babylonian period (Waezeggars 2006; Payne 2008: p. 116). Both plant (cotton, flax) and animal (wool, goat hair, silk, and leather) products were used. A preliminary study of

the salt men from Chehrabad revealed that their clothing was composed of several pieces sewn together. Both garments and trousers had decoration in the form of a red band, in one case patched and embroidered with decorative motifs. A woolen belt, made of brown, red, blue, light green, and yellow strings, was found (Aali et al. 2012a: p. 73). The shoes of this man were made of several thick leather pieces, sewn together with a leather cord (*ibid.*), and might resemble leather sandals excavated at Elephantine (see below; for post-Achaemenid leather bags in Iran, cf., e.g., Stöllner et al. 2004: p. 665 Nos. 264–265). A second miner wore a garment of light brown wool and a pair of trousers (Aali et al. 2012a: p. 74). Historical sources refer to the quality of vegetable fibers, i.e. cotton, grown in India and the Persian Gulf region (Hdt. 3.47, 106; 7.65). Footwear excavated at Elephantine includes some composed only of a sole held in place by straps, others covering the whole foot (e.g. Kuckertz 2006). In Mesopotamia, specialized craftsmen washed the clothes of the gods (Bongenaar 1997: pp. 304ff.). Through tanning, animal skins like fur, hide, or leather were prepared for further use (Herz 2012).

Important epigraphic evidence for textile production in the immediate decades before the Achaemenid intervention comes from archival records, most notably from the Ebabbar archive at Sippar in Mesopotamia between c. 605 and 562 BCE (Zawadski 2006; Reifarth and Voelling 2013), and Uruk (Payne 2008: esp. pp. 86–153). Textile fragments and yarn balls have been excavated at other Iron Age sites in Iran such as Hasanlu, where loom-woven textiles with simple weaves were found next to compound weaves made from wool, goat hair, animal and bast fibers, and other materials (Love 2011; Schauensee 2011b). Yarn balls are depicted on the Apadana reliefs. Washermen, launderers, and weavers are attested in neo-Babylonian Uruk, and a weaver of colored cloth, Nādin-a/i, was active during the reign of Darius (Payne 2008: pp. 184–185).

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SECTION XI

THE PERSPECTIVE OF ART

CHAPTER 94

Statuary and Relief

Margaret Cool Root

Scope and Nature of the Evidence

“Achaemenid sculpture” refers to official court art of the Persian kings. This chapter focuses on evidence from Iranian heartland imperial sites, with some comments on how this relates to official court art produced in/for regional capitals. It does not discuss visual culture across the empire that echoes features of Achaemenid art but is not part of its official program (e.g. Jacobs 1987; Colburn 2014, 2020: pp. 152–167). Three types of sculpture concern us:

- 1) Monuments carved into living rock on cliff faces (“rock reliefs”/“rock carvings”) are a venerable tradition in western Asia. They literally and figuratively inscribe the landscape, often creating visual dialogues across time, as one site attracts new kings and becomes a palimpsest of historical memory.
- 2) Architectural relief is the major vehicle of Achaemenid monumental sculpture. Three royal cities in western Iran preserve remains of elaborate sculpturally-enhanced ceremonial spaces. Court architecture incorporated structural elements of stone, sculpturally embellished, with a connective tissue of brick walls. First adumbrated at Pasargadae, and then developed in Persepolis, what we see today are buildings without their lofty walls and ceilings. Preserved are the stone features: soaring columns, lavishly sculpted staircases, and door jambs (also occasionally window jambs)

displaying additional sculptural imagery. At Susa, this same approach was actualized somewhat differently. Here, the columns of stone were typically joined with staircases and other armature elements made of brick. These were then sheathed in colorful glazed baked bricks that had been modeled in design segments forming complete representational units similar to the Persepolis scenes in stone. The Susa bricks show us what color must have looked like in Persepolis, where its remnants painted on stone are now only vestigial (Nagel 2013; forthcoming).

- 3) Freestanding sculptures of several varieties, scales, and materials once punctuated the built environments of the Achaemenid courts. In addition to physical remains to be described below, we have textual hints of what is now lost to us through war and metal recycling. Herodotus (VII.69), for instance, mentions a hammered gold statue of Darius' favorite wife, Artystone (Elamite Irtašduna). The life-sized bronze statue of Queen Napir-Asu (fourteenth century BCE) from Middle-Elamite Susa hints at the sumptuous majesty that Artystone's statue may have conveyed (Further Reading: Harper, Aruz, and Tallon 1992: pp. 132–135). Textual references also cite freestanding equestrian monuments for which we have no remains (Root 1979: pp. 129–130).

Evidentiary challenges arise not only from the destruction of the imperial capitals by Alexander (Razmjou 2002) but also from robbing in later times, primarily by modern European collectors (Mousavi 2012; Allen 2013).

Trends and Approaches

The study of Achaemenid sculpture is lively, with multiple approaches, divergent interpretations, and healthy tensions. Many influential critiques, especially through the 1960s, were rather dismissive of Achaemenid art on two often overlapping grounds. (i) To some Near Eastern specialists wishing for the narrative satisfaction of earlier Neo-Assyrian art, the ornamental, repetitive character of Achaemenid architectural reliefs signified lack of social content and a meaning-free subservience to the architecture (Frankfort 1954: pp. 367–378). (ii) To scholars steeped in Greek art, the restrained, stylized formal qualities of the reliefs indicated that Achaemenid visual culture was a debased provincial form of Greek art – created by dislocated Greek artisans sadly bent to the tyrant's will and/or by local artisans who were simply incapable of understanding how good (i.e. Greek) sculpture should look. This Hellenocentric (western-centered) approach achieved new force, ironically, with the availability in translation of a royal foundation inscription of Darius I from Susa (the “Susa Foundation Charter”). This text itemizes peoples of the empire who

were responsible for supplying specific raw materials and performing specific construction tasks. Ionians and Sardians are cited as stonecutters who worked the stone. It has been pointed out (Porada 1979), however, that Medians and Egyptians are listed as those who decorated the walls. Clearly there is much ambiguity here even if the text is accepted at face value. In fact, it is at its core a statement of imperial domain couched in a metaphor of construction and materials (Root 1979: pp. 7–15).

Since the last quarter of the twentieth century, the balance has shifted significantly. On the document side, increased attention to laconic administrative records (the Persepolis Fortification and Treasury Archives) has allowed us to appreciate the complexities of cosmopolitan work life at the court. This evidence coordinates with what the actual sculptures tell us of labor organization in large coordinated groups working to pre-ordained templates and of designers from multiple regions who preceded them with nuanced directives approved at the highest level. Thus, an alternative perspective urges that the style, iconography, and representational dynamics of monumental Achaemenid sculpture were an informed product of the court: a deliberative, ideologically-driven program crafted not only to impress people in a vague way but also to convey meaning and to have an effect on them. Traditions of core subject lands of the new empire (principally Elamite, Mesopotamian, and Egyptian as well as western Anatolian) were intentionally reimaged to create a visual environment that at once carried echoes of familiarity for peoples embraced by Achaemenid rule and also fresh reverberations on evocative themes. By the early 1970s these analytical trends were beginning (Amiet 1974; Goldman 1974) and culminated in a review of the historiography and blueprint for a new approach (Root 1979). By the close of the 1970s, Achaemenid sculpture emerged as a historically complex phenomenon, rich in variegated interpretive agendas and orientations. Discrete iconographical projects with varying approaches to the broad spectrum of Achaemenid sculpture owe a debt to numerous late twentieth-century commentaries by now-departed colleagues, among them P. Calmeyer (especially on Near Eastern origins of specific motifs) as well as A.S. Shahbazi and E. Porada (on interpretive problems). See their biographical entries in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*. References to their articles and those of many others appear in newer publications cited here. One specialized and contentious debate surrounds the identification of the figure emerging from the winged disk – as either the great god Ahuramazda (Auramazdā), a spirit of the king, or a polyvalent icon fluctuating along that spectrum (e.g. Garrison 2011). For the specific sculptures discussed here, I take the figure as a rendering of Ahuramazda in his guise as patron of the king as well as the Iranian god of wisdom and light.

Alongside sea changes over the last approximately 40 years in approaches to meaning, equally important efforts have been underway to probe the

techniques and labor organization that produced the sculptural output. Major systematic advances were made by considering empirical evidence of parts left unfinished and the distribution of masons' marks in order to understand how labor for stone architectural reliefs may have been organized (Tilia 1968; Nylander 1970; Roaf 1983). Analyses of a similar nature followed on systems of proportion and on techniques of production of baked brick architectural sculptures (Azarpay 1990; Maras 2010). Meticulous scrutiny of the carved surfaces of Persepolis also inspired renewed interest in the remnants of color and in the preliminary sketches for polychromatic treatments of the sculpture were incised into the stone reliefs (Tilia 1978: pp. 31–69), commented upon by early travelers and then by scholars including E. Herzfeld and J. Lerner, and now subject to a comprehensive study (Nagel forthcoming).

Pasargadae, Founded by Cyrus II

The architectural sculptures adorning the ceremonial buildings in the plain at Pasargadae (cf. Figure 15.1) were certainly created before the death of Cyrus. The inscriptions naming Cyrus seem, however, to have been added by Darius I. This was a pious and also a politically expedient act affirming the role of the earlier ruler and the linkage of Darius to that recent past. Although interpretive efforts continue on many fronts, Stronach (1978) provides the excavation documentation of record, with much bibliography to that date. Palace R (the Gatehouse) is a simple rectangular, eight-columned hall with four doors. Originally, guardian bull colossi on the Neo-Assyrian model stood facing outward to guard the great entrances at the northwest and southeast. Only traces of these remain. Two smaller doors punctuate the Gatehouse at the long sides. Only one door jamb relief (of the northeast side) remains standing (Figure 94.1). Originally a trilingual inscription appeared above the sculpture translated as “I am Cyrus the king, an Achaemenian.” It was recorded at an early date but is no longer extant. The relief depicts a standing human figure with two pairs of outspread wings, dressed in a long, fringed robe. He wears a headdress which is a faithful quotation of the Egyptian *hm-hm* war crown (Stronach 1978: pp. 47–55; Root 1979: pp. 47–49, 300–303; Álvarez-Mon 2009). This remarkable figure walks into the Gatehouse. It is conventionally called a “Genius,” reflecting terminology used to describe beneficent winged figures seen on Neo-Assyrian sculptures. In fact, it may be an allegorical representation of the royal person (in this case, Cyrus) presented through garments, bodily pose, style, and accoutrements of wings and crown to evoke aspects of cult drawn from critical arenas of Elam, Assyria, Babylonia, and the Egypto-Levantine sphere. The Egyptian crown is often interpreted as an

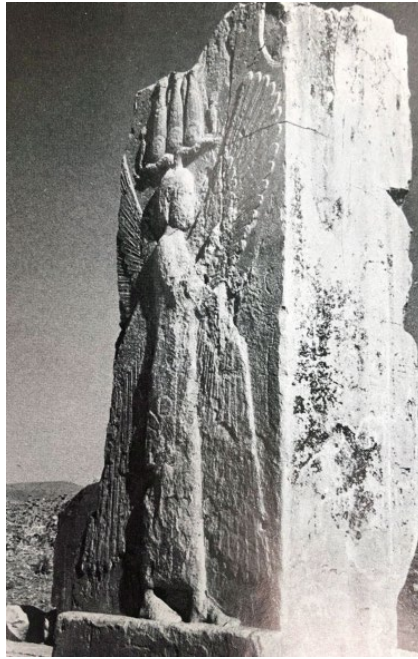


Figure 94.1 Pasargadae, Gatehouse R, Doorjamb with relief of winged genius. Source: Photo M.C. Root.

oblique echo of an Egyptianizing Phoenician bronze or ivory rendering rather than a direct reference to its core Egyptian cultic meaning. A competing (and more compelling) interpretation in the historical context of Pasargadae sees the crown as a direct allusion to Egyptian kingship and Cyrus' expansive imperial aspirations there.

In Palace S, three out of an original four doorways punctuate the four porticoes framing the main hall (Stronach 1978: pp. 68–70). In the paired jambs of each door, the same composition is replicated in mirror image. Representational types all depict figures slightly over life-size (but preserved only to knee height) in procession moving out of the main hall: (northwest door) a bare-footed, bare-legged human followed by a monster with birds' talons and human legs; (southeast door) a bare-footed human wearing fish garb followed by a bovine figure holding a massive staff or standard (Figure 94.2); and (southwest door) three bare-footed humans wearing plain long robes, leading a walking bull. Stylistically and iconographically, the reliefs of northwest and southeast are strongly indebted to Neo-Assyrian prototypes depicting cultic-mythological figures. The representation in the southwest door, with its figures apparently in fully human guise leading a great bull, suggests a procession of gift-giving such as we encounter in greatly elaborated form on the Persepolis Apadana. All are shown moving out into the plain.



Figure 94.2 Pasargadae Palace S, Southeast Door, Left jamb with relief of fishman and bull creature. Source: Reproduced by permission of Robert Rollinger.

Palace P is a broad rectangular, hypostyle hall commanding the panorama of the entire built installation in the plain and its formal garden on one long side, and the stretch of open plain leading toward the Tomb of Cyrus on the other long side. Two porticoes brace the rectangular hall on these sides. A doorway in each is placed off-center so that the one at northeast does not disrupt a statue emplacement in that portico (facing onto the other buildings). The doorjambs of Palace P are preserved today to just above waist level. Based on well-preserved examples in Persepolis and some hints from Herzfeld's drawings at an early date, we can confidently state that they show a royal figure at approximately life-size followed by a smaller attendant originally holding a parasol over the king. The costume of the royal figure and his attendant as we see it in Pasargadae forecasts the stiffly pleated Persian court robe that will be a hallmark of Persepolitan courtly attire there and in Susa. The royal robe and shoes in Palace P (unlike those at Persepolis) were originally embellished with metal attachments, indicated by slots in the stone (Figure 55.8). The figures move out from the main hall into the plain. At Persepolis as well, reliefs of the king moving out of a building invariably include his attendant holding the parasol.

The Bisitun Monument of Darius I

A lengthy trilingual cuneiform inscription crowned by an imposing relief appears some 322 ft above the great northern east–west highway in the Zagros foothills of northwestern Iran linking Babylon and points west to Ecbatana and thence to points east in the empire. This place is called Bagastana (“Place of the Gods”). The inscription describes the king’s collaborative relation with the great god Ahuramazda; it also gives a detailed account of the rebellions quelled in the first year of Darius’ reign, with the aid of Persian nobles and the patron deity. The relief presents a visual synthesis that eschews battle narratives and focuses instead on an idealized emblem of imminent conflict-resolution through divinely-mandated royal judgment. The ruler stands larger than those around him, placing one foot atop the squirming figure of Gaumata, pretender to the throne. Behind the king two Persian nobles bear arms. Darius himself looks toward and gestures deferentially to Ahuramazda, emergent from a winged disk. Directly below Ahuramazda, bound prisoners stand poised to come forward (Figure 55.7). This representation is widely considered the only “historical” relief of the Achaemenid repertoire. But despite the obvious relation of historical text to sculptural image, the visual depiction in fact conforms to a pervasive approach in Achaemenid art that emphasizes liminal moments and metaphors to express complex ideas (Root 1979: pp. 182–226, 2013).

A rock relief of a local northwest Iranian ruler on the periphery of the Akkadian Empire in the reign of King Naram-Sin (c. 2254–2218 BCE) is still faintly visible at Sar-i pul near Bisitun. This carving provided a ready model for Darius’s composition and iconography (Root 1979: pp. 196–201). In the third-millennium prototype, the ruler stands with one foot on a squirming naked rebel while the goddess Ishtar drags the next doomed figure in line by a lead through his nose. At Bisitun, the scene is very similar in several ways: the posture of the king and the rebel underfoot; his relation to his patron deity; and the lineup of enemies moving forward. The bound enemies of Bisitun remain fully clothed, however. Darius looks to Ahuramazda hovering in his winged disk over the captives. The accompanying text explains that Ahuramazda put the rebels into the king’s hand for Darius to do with as he saw fit. There is an important feature of imminent judgment by the king implicit here. The sculpture shows us a moment before decisions will be made, whereas the text tells us in gory detail how each of the rebels met his fate. In formal features of style and composition, the Bisitun relief reinvents ancient Near Eastern traditions of power art but it eschews battle narrative as we know it from Assyrian palace reliefs.

Circumstantial evidence of the content of the Bisitun inscription and relief narrows its date of composition and carving to no later than 519 BCE. It thus becomes one of the few closely and firmly fixed points of absolute chronology

either of late archaic Greek art or of Achaemenid art. The drapery style of the pleated and voluminously sleeved court robe allows the royal figure to display a corporeality that is masked in the canonical renderings of Palace P earlier and of sculptures of Persepolis and Susa later. In this aspect, the Bisitun relief reaches far back to evoke the muscular image of King Naram-Sin in his stele depicting victory over mountain tribes in western Iran (Feldman 2007; Root 2013). Naram-Sin's monument was later seized as booty in the twelfth century BCE and deposited in the then-Elamite royal treasury at Susa, which continued to be operative at least into the reign of Darius. The Bisitun relief sculpture also deliberately evokes certain stylistic modes of Neo-Assyrian power in the late seventh century BCE: most obvious in the head and coiffure of the king (Figure 94.3), which are differently stylized in "canonical" Achaemenid sculpture in the heartland (compare with Figures 55.1, 94.4).

A key element of the iconography of the Bisitun monument is the crenelated royal crown (Root 2013). It may have been developed already in the reign of Cyrus, but the destruction of the royal figures in Palace P above the torso denies us this knowledge. At least beginning with Darius, this crown type becomes henceforth the dynastic crown of the Achaemenid line (Root 1979: pp. 92–93; Porada 1979). In Persepolis, there are some cases where the crown had its crenellations added in paint or in metal attachments. But the basic format remained constant. Since late prehistory, crenellation icons



Figure 94.3 Bisitun, Rock relief of Darius I, Head of Darius. Source: Reproduced by permission of Bruno Jacobs.



Figure 94.4 Naqsh-i Rostam, Rock-carved tomb of king Xerxes, King before Ahuramazda and altar. Source: Photo L.S. Root.

connoted notions of the mountain and hence nearness to the divine. The king wearing crenellations in this way makes him at one with the cosmic *mountain top* even as he has just reached its peak to confer with Ahuramazda. This aura reinforces the nature of the rock relief as a medium where sculpture and culture collude with landscape. The monument faces almost exactly due east toward the rising sun, enhancing its cyclical cosmic performativity as it awakens to the morning sun and recedes into shadow as the daylight wanes.

The Bisitun inscription itself is a form of abstract, rather than representational, sculpture. From a distance, the rows of elegantly carved cuneiform signs stream down the mountain from below the relief. The signs may once have been inlaid in gold or blue paste, giving them a numinous charge. We have evidence for such treatments in inscriptions of Persepolis and Naqsh-i Rostam. Viewers will have been struck by the power of the Great King to commission such work. Doubtless in antiquity there were people around ready to tell the stories recounted in the text as travelers passed, took refreshment, and stopped at a checkpoint at the oasis spring directly below. In purely visual terms, the vastness of the inscription on its lofty mountain peak inspired awe (as it does to this day) – as an unreadable but fully apprehensible abstract visual portrait of the royal dictum.

In the Bisitun text, Darius notes that he has had his message sent far and wide in the different languages of the empire. This factor of regional dissemi-

nation is also critical in the Achaemenid sculptural arts. A local Babylonian version of the Bisitun monument, for instance, was carved onto a massive free-standing stone monument (a stele) set up along the entry way into Babylon. The fragmentary remnants are now in Berlin. The iconography and the text were adapted and condensed for this setting, although the depiction of the king and his crenelated crown remains one of the constants (Root 2013).

Naqsh-i Rostam

Hard by Persepolis, the ancient Elamite cult center at Naqsh-i Rostam was chosen by Darius I and his successors as the majestic cliff site for their rock-cut tombs (Schmidt 1970). The face of each tomb is in the form of an equal-armed cross. As an icon, the equal-armed cross goes back to late prehistory in Iran, denoting the idea of a meeting place, a crossroads, and (by extension) a market place – a site marked as place of coming together. On the royal tombs, the bottom projection of the cross is left blank and smooth, giving a sense of suspension and uplift to the upper zones. The horizontal arm is carved in relief to represent a palace façade. Columns crowned by sculpted animal foreparts (protomes) frame a door, which doubles as the actual entrance into the living rock and the burial chambers hollowed out behind it. On the “roof” of this palace the main scene in relief shows an elaborate scenario (Figures 87.2 and 94.4). Personifications of 30 ethnic groups of the empire (including Persians) harmoniously lift off the ground a great dais that supports the king. Twenty-eight of the peoples present themselves in a posture associated in Egypt and the Near East with lifting up cosmic entities. The other two stand on either side, hoisting the dais up in a more naturalistic mode. The figure on the far right actually turns his head around to look behind him. The intention is clearly to portray the dais not only being raised aloft but also being moved. In later Sasanian times, the Persian ruler was turned to face the rising sun as part of a celebration of cosmic kingship. The Achaemenid royal tomb façade hints that this tradition must reach back in some form into the Achaemenid past. The king stands atop a stepped platform to face Ahuramazda in the winged disk, hovering in the sky space. Beyond Ahuramazda a fire blazes on a stepped altar. Further to the right, a solar disk with inscribed crescent moon shines as an icon of the perpetual cycle of time. Beyond the main area of the tomb façade behind the king, three registers of Persian nobles stand at attention. On the other side of the façade, three registers of men stand looking toward the figure of the king, each one raises a hand swathed in the sleeve of his court robe up to his face in mourning.

The Tomb of Darius (Figure 87.2) is the only one that bears inscriptions. In the representational field directly behind the king, a long text outlines ideals

of Persian kingship and also refers to the sculptures of those who bear the throne (the dais) as a sign that the power of a Persian man has gone forth far. These personifications have identifying captions. Two of the figures of nobles carved on the flanking cliff face behind the king bear identifying captions as Persians we know in Greek as Gobryas and Aspathines – both attested in Herodotus as members of the inner royal circle and also in Elamite texts of the Persepolis Fortification Archive. Gobryas is also mentioned in Darius's trilingual Bisitun inscription.

Persepolis and Susa

Because of the large amount of stone used in construction at Persepolis (among other factors), its sculptural program is by far the better known. Persepolis was a new-city foundation of Darius I. Susa had been a major city since the beginning of urbanism; it was, however, reimagined as an Achaemenid capital by Darius I. We will focus on Persepolis, integrating key material from Susa. As with Pasargadae, the excavations of Persepolis in the 1930s have been published in major volumes (Schmidt 1953, 1957, 1970; Tilia 1972, 1978 for more recent restoration projects and attendant discoveries; Mousavi 2012 for a review of excavations and explorations across time including Iranian-led projects). Susa was excavated by the French over almost 100 years and the results of all this work have been reviewed and updated (Further Reading: Harper, Aruz, and Tallon 1992; Perrot 2013).

The principal sculptural evidence from Persepolis stands upon a lofty man-made stone platform, the Takht (“throne” in Persian), rising off the plain against the backbone of the Kuh-i Rahmat (Mount of Mercy) on the east. The masonry sheathing of the Takht is formed of huge polygonal blocks fitted together without mortar and polished to a smooth surface. This masonry style is itself, somewhat like the Bisitun inscription seen from afar, a form of abstract sculpture. Here the jigsaw-puzzle effect echoes a trope of royal rhetoric describing an empire put together of many peoples speaking many languages and inhabiting many kinds of landscapes (Root 1990). This abstract iconographic message combines with the awe-inspiring comprehension of the massive human resources needed to produce the “look,” which is far more labor-intensive than Greek-style modular masonry. This package of meaning-out-of-form was manifest to all who climbed the stairs of the Gate of All Lands (so titled by Xerxes) and who then passed through a door guarded by colossal attached bull sculptures modeled on those of earlier Assyrian palaces. Massive supports under the two main doors of a similar gatehouse at Susa indicate the existence of guardian colossi there as well.

On the Persepolis Takht, crenellations pervade the built landscape – not as functional battlements behind which a soldier might shield himself but in non-defensive modes crowning staircases and parapets. They are indeed a form of architectural sculpture conveying an insistent cosmic message of the place itself as a metaphorical mountain-top nearness to the divine sphere (Pope 1957; Anderson 2002; Root 2013). Another pervasive element of the architectural sculpture is the lion-and-bull emblem. This motif in relief punctuates the facades of all the buildings in the western sector. It shows a male lion biting the back of a (male) bull whose head turns back to create an elegant formal design (Figure 94.5). Although sometimes described as an emblem of military conquest, the multivalence of the motif has been noted with variant nuances by several scholars. The composition here evokes not a lion kill but rather the foreplay in lion mating. The pairing of male lion and male bull is not a misunderstanding of nature on either sexual or species grounds. The conjoining of these beasts combines the allusion to fecund union with an overriding cosmic imperative: it describes the daily and seasonal cycles of sun (Leo/lion) and moon (Taurus/bull). Its ubiquity insists upon the cyclical nature of time that binds the cosmos and is like unto the continuity (and fecundity) of the Achaemenid dynasty (Root 2003). The significance of all this is magnified by the understanding that the form of the Achaemenid throne was itself redolent with the idea of a lion and bull cosmic collaborative

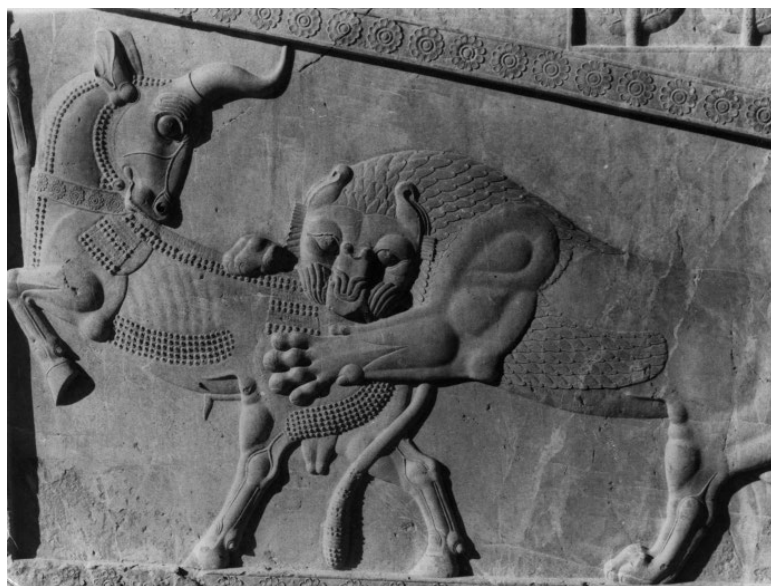


Figure 94.5 Persepolis, Apadana, East façade, Lion and bull emblem. Source: Photo M.C. Root.

(Jamzadeh 1996). We are also reminded of the icon of solar orb inscribed with lunar crescent that floats in the sky of the tomb reliefs of Darius and his successors (Figure 94.4).

The imposing audience hall of the Takht (the Apadana) sits atop its own stone platform. The west portico, with a throne emplacement, looks out over the plain far below (Root 2015). On the north and the east, the porticoes give access to the structure via two sets of double stairs adorned with extended relief systems in mirror image (Schmidt 1953; Root 1979: pp. 86–95, 227–284). It depicts an extended vision of a gift-giving procession that is just about to begin. In original form, a central panel showed the king enthroned with his crown prince behind him under a baldachin, receiving an official shown in the middle of a bow (Figure 55.1). This official is a fulcrum of immineence. When the king has acknowledged him, the procession will be set in motion. On one side of the staircase facades (Wing A), elite Persian males anticipate the ceremony (Figure 94.6). They wear alternately the Persian court robe and the trouser-tunic-coat equestrian costume common to many Iranian groups, including the Persians. Some commentaries persist in the misunderstanding that these figures show alternating Median and Persian ethnic groups, but the message here is of courtly Persian-ness in its multiple social functions in support of the king. Toward the front of the procession nearest the original central panel, the figures of waiting nobles, some discreetly



Figure 94.6 Persepolis, Apadana, East façade, Nobles. Source: Photo M.C. Root.

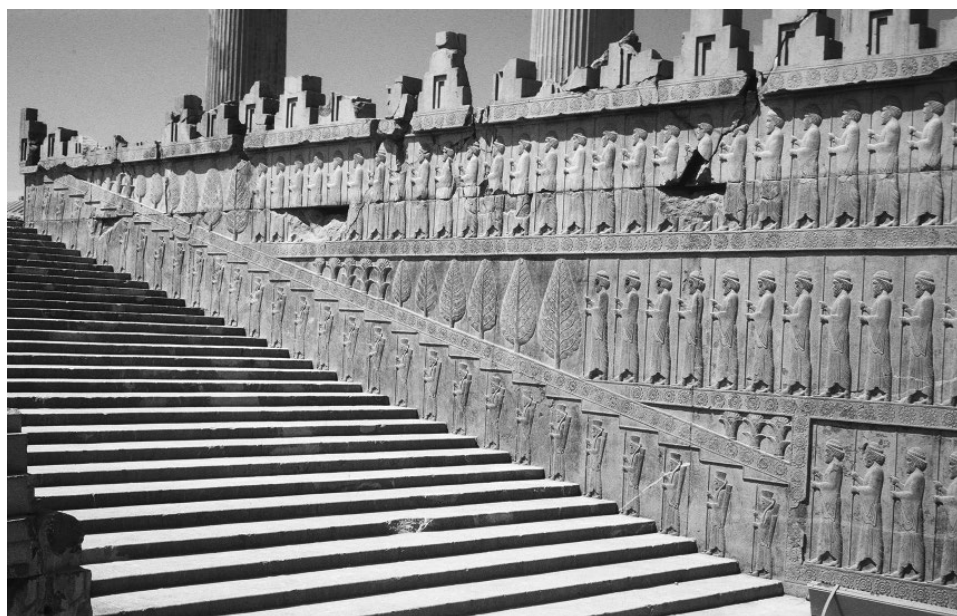


Figure 94.7 Persepolis, Apadana, East façade, Guards. Source: Photo M.C. Root.

conversing, give way to guards at attention (Figure 94.7). Ranged behind the king on Wing B in three registers are depictions of 23 delegate groups from lands of the empire, each group separated by a cypress tree and each group with an advance man who is taken by the hand by a Persian courtier in alternating courtly or military/equestrian garb (Figure 55.2). Each group is poised to be activated into motion toward an audience with the king, bearing him gifts. Some exemplary foci of research continue to include: (i) determining with better certainty the identities of several ambiguous ethnic personifications of subject lands depicted in numerous imperial representations on the royal tombs and the Apadana in particular (Roaf 1974; Jacobs 1982; Gropp 2009); (ii) analyzing (from varying viewpoints) specific accoutrements and details of items such as weaponry and vessels depicted on the Apadana in relation to actual extant artifacts (e.g. Ellis 1966; Muscarella 1980; Cahill 1985; Dusinger 1999; Potts 2012); and (iii) larger-bore inquiries that move into metaphorical constructs and thence into realms of intended and received meanings and related matters of audience reception pertaining to specific delegations (e.g. Calmeyer 1980; Root 2003, 2007, and in *Further Reading*: Darbandi and Zournatzi 2008).

The original central panels of the Apadana facades were at some point (probably in the reign of Artaxerxes I) moved to the Treasury, where they were installed in Court 17, the most lavishly decorated area of the structure

(Tilia 1972: pp. 175–198) and a major node of traffic. The precise reasons for the removal of the panels from the Apadana into a secluded but equally powerful space remain unclear. But it is definite that they were not put in Court 17 because the imagery was disgraced (as has been suggested). They were replaced by panels displaying Persian guards at attention framing an inscription panel. The portrayal of Persian guards here and elsewhere in Persepolis and also in Susa (in brick) has been characterized often by westerners as boring, deadly, and frozen. A fragment from Susa of one of these figures includes part of an adjoining inscription naming Otanes (Root 1979: p. 76 and n. 98). He was one of the noble Persian helpers of Darius mentioned in the Bisitun inscription and also by Herodotus. This evidence from Susa combines with the captioned figures of Gobryas and Aspathines on the tomb façade of Darius mentioned above to suggest something truly significant: onlookers were meant to imagine the figures of nobles in Achaemenid relief sculpture (whether they were captioned or not) as representing the idea of a multitude of real men who served the Persian hegemony. They may look boring to twentieth-century viewers, but within the Achaemenid court circle they signified something socially and politically powerful.

In several other Persepolis buildings, the king appears in state and/or in the guise of a royal hero subduing animal creatures (Figure 55.4). Additional motifs include scenes alluding to rituals involving animal sacrifice that perhaps took place in some fashion in or near certain buildings (Razmjou 2010). That said, we no longer see the entire complex as one vast illustration in stone of an Iranian New Year celebration giving a literal blueprint of rituals exactly as and where they took place in actuality (*pace* Ghirshman 1957; Pope 1957). Although there is a definite suggestion of actuality in the imagery, the whole is a highly metaphorical program that plays with actuality but infuses allusions to it with cosmic, ritual, and religious associations combined with social and political innuendo.

In esthetic terms, interesting strategies provide visual unity across the relief-adorned structures on the Takht. These strategies include the pervasive crenellations noted earlier and also the presence of the ubiquitous rosette. But they also move to more subtle systems of form that appear repeatedly, such as a rendering of the convex tongue-like shape that appears, for instance, on details of animal fur and as the petal form of the rosette (Root 1990). The aspect of ornament which so preoccupied Frankfort (1954) in the mid-twentieth century deserves another look from a fresh analytical perspective. Passages of the sculpture are composed of smooth volumes punctuated by finely detailed renderings of coiffure and realia such as vessels. These elements arrest the movement of the participant in the built landscape, enticing his eye to linger and even to touch. They also convey information about the prestige of the realia so depicted. Other esthetic considerations deserving of more work in a new era include cross-media

citationality. The discrete rows of gift-bearers seem to cite cylinder seals rolled out across the Apadana facade so that its surface becomes a sealed document of empire. Similarly, the lion and bull emblems impress the facades like a dynastic stamp seal. The cross-over impact of fine metalworking in the sculptural style has been noted in the past (e.g. Amiet 1974; Porada 1965). Frankfort's (1954) interesting remarks on the reliefs as a form of textile draping the architecture (see Figure 94.7) need to be analyzed from the vantage point of current discourses that will take us beyond a notion that such citationality can only indicate a dearth of true sculptural grasp.

The remains of large freestanding Achaemenid sculpture in Persepolis are confined so far to animal representations (Schmidt 1957: pp. 69–70; Kawami 1991). Roughly life-sized statues of standing male ibexes and bulls, seated canines, and reclining lions marked entrances to various structures. Such statuary has a long and important past in the Near East, with meanings that we should not underestimate (Porada 1990). A broken Greek marble statue of the “Penelope” type was found in the Persepolis Treasury in 1936 (Schmidt 1957: pp. 66–67; Palagia 2008). This now-famous find reminds us that booty and diplomatic gifts from afar in the form of statuary were also part of the visual environment of courtly life at the imperial centers – even though we cannot call them “Achaemenid art” strictly speaking.



Figure 94.8 Teheran, National Museum: Statue of Darius from Susa. Source: Reproduced by permission of Jebrael Nekandeh, National Museum of Iran.

We turn now to Susa for remnants of at least two colossal stone statues of the king found in the area of the Apadana there (Root 1979: pp. 110–114). One of these definitely depicted the king in the guise of royal hero, probably grasping a lion cub somewhat as we see the motif on a set of door jamb reliefs in the Palace of Darius in Persepolis. The statue of Darius excavated at the Gate of Darius at Susa in 1972 is a colossal image made of Egyptian granite and produced in Egypt for an Egyptian temple (Roaf 1974; Root 1979: pp. 68–72, pp. 131–161; Perrot 2013, pp. 256–299; Colburn 2020: pp. 245–257). Although missing above the shoulders, what is preserved displays a vivid creative amalgam of Achaemenid and Egyptian stylistic and iconographical features (Figure 94.8). The base is decorated with Egyptian imagery including name rings with personifications of lands of the empire (Figures 59.1, 59.2). Egyptian tradition has been altered to show the figures in an age-old Egyptian posture of cosmic lifting, which brings them into ideological harmony with what we see on the tomb facades at Naqsh-e Rostam (cf. Figure 94.4). The figure stands in the Egyptian striding pose against a back pillar, wearing a Persian court robe inscribed in cuneiform and also in hieroglyphic texts. Exactly when or why it was removed to Susa is unknown. This monument demonstrates the versatility of the program of Achaemenid art, able to speak in multiple visual languages in order to appeal to local settings across the empire.

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CHAPTER 95

The Minor Arts

Mark B. Garrison

Introduction

The material presence of the Achaemenid Empire, by this I mean artifacts signaling a recognizable Achaemenid-ness (in distinction to people, dress, administrative systems, etc.), took the form of a fairly standardized assemblage of small-scale, portable artifacts, what we generally call minor arts: metal vessels and tableware, jewelry, and seals.¹ To this list we may also add stoneware, cast glass vessels, carved ivory, and textiles, but in these cases the amount of material that survives is relatively small, limiting what one may say by way of broad overview.²

While toreutics, jewelry, and seals as *objects* constitute a recognizable assemblage of Achaemenid material, we are confronted with a variety of *forms*, *styles*, and *iconography* within this material. No clear and universally accepted model has emerged as a guide to classification. There are several related issues that account for this state of affairs. First, with the exception of glyptic from Persepolis, the Iranian capitals have produced little by way of actual minor arts. Thus, we cannot for the moment define distinctive forms and styles of central Achaemenid toreutic and jewelry. Second, we lack secure provenances for much of the artifactual record that actually survives; in many cases, especially gold and/or silver metalwork, forgeries compromise the record. When an object does have a provenance, most often it is a burial. The dating of these burials is generally broad and in any case provides only a *terminus ante-quem*

for the objects within the burial, many of which may be much older than the actual interment. These circumstances are especially to be regretted in the case of precious metalwork, which has been the focus of much investigation.

Thus, one is hard-pressed to relate, with any sense of confidence, particular forms and styles of the surviving toreutic and jewelry to particular places. The result is that the identification of an Achaemenid imperial presence in the material record at a particular place, and the local response to it, remain challenging endeavors.³ We face severe difficulties in defining micro-styles that can be associated with particular times and places for toreutics, stoneware, and jewelry. The situation is better for glyptic, where archives of sealed administrative documents at a few sites allow for a relatively deep glimpse into local production.

Owing to the state of the evidence, the exact significance of the descriptive label “Achaemenid” with regard to precious metalware and stoneware, jewelry, and seals varies from scholar to scholar (Gates 2002: pp. 107–108; Rehm 2010: pp. 160–161). In a very broad sense, “Achaemenid” can mean simply something produced within the boundaries of the empire during Achaemenid rule. In a very narrow sense, “Achaemenid” may designate an object or style that has specific characteristics indicating that it originates from the central heartland capitals in Iran. In many instances, the descriptor Achaemenid is used without any definition.

A variety of classificatory schemes has been offered, mostly in connection with precious metalware. An extremely wide-spread notion is that of an “Achaemenid International Style” across media (Grose 1989: p. 81 and Ignatiadou 2004: p. 183, for glass; Melikian-Chirvani 1993: pp. 111–130; Ignatiadou 2009, for glass and metal bowls). This label designates for the most part a recognizable set of forms and decorative elements, thus more of a vocabulary than an underlying grammar.⁴ More complex classificatory schemes include, for example, that of Luschey (1983: pp. 322–329), who proposed three categories for metalware: “achämenidisches Importstück,” “von achämenidischer Tradition beeinflusst,” and “Werke, die mit dem Achämenidischen nur noch entfernt zu tun haben” (Treister [2010] is similar). Francfort (2007: p. 277) posits for central Asia a five-stage process of adapting/adopting Achaemenid objects: “...‘copies’ fidèles des originaux,... imitations,... contrafaçons,... dérivations,... transformations.” Rehm (2010) offers a threefold division for the minor arts, developed from her study of metalware from the Black Sea region: “court-style art,” “satrapal art,” and “Perso-barbarian art.” All of these schemes seek to identify both places of origins and levels of remove from an original “Achaemenid” style as documented in the heartland capitals.⁵ These schemes are also interested in identifying local adaptations of the minor arts in the provinces in opposition to imported “originals” from the imperial center so as better to understand the nature of local acculturation to the Achaemenid imperial phenomenon. This process of

acculturation is often described as “Persianization” (e.g. Root 1991; Dusinberre 2003: pp. 203–217; Briant and Boucharlat 2005: pp. 20–25; Brosius 2011; Tuplin 2011; Stein 2014).

Achaemenid Glyptic

By far and away the most numerous, best studied, and most-well documented artifact in Achaemenid minor arts is glyptic. As described in Chapter 56 Seals and Sealing, seals and sealing were two critical mechanisms that allowed the state to function and prosper. Seals and/or sealed documents survive from almost every region encompassed by the empire. There are hundreds of actual seals and thousands of seals preserved as impressions from the Achaemenid period. These seals are executed in a variety of carving styles and exhibit a wide range of thematic and iconographic content. Among this material, it is critical to distinguish glyptic made in the Achaemenid period within the boundaries of the empire from what we should conceptualize as “official” or “imperial Achaemenid glyptic.” Imperial Achaemenid glyptic is most clearly defined by a large corpus of glyptic imagery preserved in two important archives at the heartland capital, Persepolis: the Persepolis Fortification archive and the Persepolis Treasury archive.⁶

One version of imperial Achaemenid glyptic, the best known, is characterized by a distinctive constellation of themes, iconography, and compositional formula rendered in various, but related, carving techniques (Figure 95.1). Generally, this particular version of the imperial Achaemenid style is called the Court Style, although there is not universal consensus on the exact stylistic parameters of the phenomenon and, thus, what is conveyed by the term (Boardman 2000: pp. 156–58; Garrison and Root 2001: pp. 18–19; Merrillees 2005: p. 3238; Rehm 2010: pp. 164–171; Garrison 2011, 2013). For many commentators, the most distinguishing and easily recognized features of this “style,” and the most often discussed, are in fact a canonical set of iconographic elements: the so-called Persian court robe; banded dentate royal crowns; long squared beards; a suite of weapons consisting of the bow, quiver, bow-case, spear, and/or dagger; lions and bulls, the latter often winged and human-headed or human-faced; the figure in the winged ring/disk or the winged ring/disk; date palms; paneled inscriptions (commonly trilingual, Old Persian, Elamite, and Babylonian). No one seal exhibits all of these elements of what we may call “court-centric” iconography. To no surprise, this set of iconographic elements marking imperial Achaemenid glyptic is very similar to that characterizing Achaemenid monumental relief in Iran.⁷ The thematic repertoire of the Court Style is not large, dominated principally by heroic encounters, archers, and various types of worship scenes (Garrison



Figure 95.1 Persepolis Fortification Archive: PFS 11* impressed on the left edge of NN 939. Source: Reproduced by permission of M.B. Garrison.

2017: pp. 333–385). Compositional formulae tend to favor a series of strong, isolated vertical accents that produce a staccato rhythm.

Because of the wealth of evidence from the Fortification and Treasury archives, the stylistic parameters of what we may call the Persepolitan Court Style can be defined quite precisely (Garrison 1996, 2011, 2014a,b). Recent research on glyptic from the Fortification archive has indicated that side-by-side with the Persepolitan Court Style there existed a second expression of imperial Achaemenid glyptic characterized by extensive quotation and reworking of Assyrian themes and iconography rendered in a rich modeled style of carving (Garrison 2014b). In some cases, this Assyrianizing style also employed some elements of court-centric iconography.

Distinct from imperial Achaemenid glyptic are seals that utilize court-centric themes and iconography but are carved in myriad local styles. These seals are very numerous and are found across the empire. This phenomenon may be the clearest expression of local responses to the imperial presence in the arts, perhaps reflecting local emulation of court-inspired imagery as part of larger processes of assimilation and/or affiliation of local elites with the Achaemenid imperial enterprise (Dusinberre 1997, 2003; Stein 2014). It is important to distinguish the use of court-centric themes and iconography (associated with the Persepolitan Court Style) rendered in local carving styles from imperial Achaemenid glyptic; this has not always been done in the scholarship.

The surviving record does not appear to indicate that there was any coordinated attempt on the part of the imperial center systematically to dictate a particular and distinctive Achaemenid imperial style of glyptic representation across the empire, or, indeed, even in the imperial heartland itself in southwestern Iran (Garrison 2014a,b). Where evidence is sufficient, the glyptic landscape is dominated by vigorous local styles of carving, some deploying court-centric themes and iconography, with the rare appearance of a seal exhibiting the distinctive stylistic and iconographic traits of the Persepolitan Court Style.

A detailed synthesis of the glyptic landscape of the Achaemenid Empire, one that attempts to account for the variety of local carving traditions, has yet to be undertaken (cf., however, Boardman 1970a: pp. 303–357 and 2000: pp. 152–174; Merrillees 2005: pp. 25–43). Much energy has been devoted to the issue of the so-called Graeco-Persian style(s), associated with the western edges of the empire, first articulated by Furtwängler (1903: pp. 116–126), but given greater currency by Boardman (1970a: pp. 303–357; 1970b, 1998, 2000: pp. 152–174). For Furtwängler, the term denoted a Greek style that exhibited a primitive, mannered stiffness; he inferred that the artists were Greek, forced to work in an unnatural manner to accommodate the tastes of their eastern patrons. This model, and the very concept of Graeco-Persian style(s), or, more generally, a Graeco-Persian phenomenon in the arts, is highly problematic (e.g. Root 1991; Dusinberre 1997, 2003: pp. 163–171; Gates 2002).⁸

Assemblages of sealed administrative documents from across the empire allow for exceptionally fine resolution of the local glyptic landscape at select moments in time and space (see Chapter 56 Seals and Sealing). Of the archives outside of Persepolis, that from Daskyleion is perhaps the most interesting (Kaptan 2002). There is little that one can qualify as Persepolitan Court Style. The royal-name seal DS 2 (Xerxes) certainly is Persepolitan Court Style, but DS 3 (another royal-name seal, of Xerxes) seems local.⁹ The royal audience scene on DS 4, carrying an inscription naming Artaxerxes, is a spectacularly planned and executed design. The carving is a rich modeled style; all figures are rendered in profile with deeply set profile shoulders. The carving seems closely related to the modeled version of the Court Style seen on PFS 11* (Figure 95.1) from Persepolis, but DS 4 has an even greater sense of plasticity. One wonders whether the imagery and carving style would have seemed archaizing by the reign of Artaxerxes. With these few possible exceptions, the seals from Daskyleion appear to be exclusively local products. Unsurprisingly, given its location in northwestern Anatolia only some 30 km from the shores of the Sea of Marmara, various degrees of Greek-inspired styles and themes are dominant. Kaptan (2002: pp. 106–193) has identified one cluster of stylistic groups imitating Persepolitan Court Style, another exhibiting

“Persianizing” tendencies but having no direct link to the Court Style *per se*, and then a third that she calls “Greek Styles.” All these stylistic clusters she localizes in various centers in western Anatolia.

Metalware

The Greek literary sources frequently highlight gold and silver vessels as testimonies to the luxury of the table associated with the Achaemenid court.¹⁰ In addition to hearsay and rumor, Greeks would have been familiar with these vessels through display of war booty and diplomatic gifts (Moorey 1985: p. 859; Miller 1997: pp. 29–62, 109–133 and 2010; Simpson 2005: p. 104).

While the Achaemenid period is renowned still today for its precious metalware, the number of provenanced gold and silver vessels that can be attributed to the Achaemenid period is not extensive (Luschey 1939; Amandry 1959; Muscarella 1977: pp. 192–196; Abka’i-Khavari 1988; Sideris 2008; Ebbinghaus 2018: pp. 137–139, 185). Most of the evidence is without secure archeological provenance or of dubious provenance (“said-to-be-from”), and there are some forgeries. Almost all artifacts that are of reliable provenance come from the periphery of the empire, especially Thrace, Anatolia, and the Black Sea region. Unfortunately, the Achaemenid imperial capitals have yielded very few gold or silver vessels, although many vessels of unknown provenance have been attributed to them.¹¹ The reliefs on the stairways of the Apadana are often invoked in lieu of the actual artifacts, since many of the delegations bring gifts in the form of (presumably) metal vessels and jewelry (Abka’i-Khavari 1988: pp. 93–95; Calmeyer 1993; Simpson 2005: pp. 104–107). One is hard pressed, however, to understand the exact relation between the delegations and the vessels that they bring (Boardman 2000: pp. 184–194).

The diversity of form and decoration within the surviving corpus of precious metalware attributed to the Achaemenid period is quite striking. The most common shapes are the hemispherical bowl/cup (Figure 95.2), amphora, beaker, jug, alabastron, and horn-shaped rhyton (Figure 95.3). Ladles, spoons, strainers, etc. are also attested. All these shapes have antecedents in earlier cultures of Assyria and Anatolia (Luschey 1939; Moorey 1985: p. 856; Abka’i-Khavari 1988: pp. 92–93, 111–112; Boardman 2000: pp. 186, 191). The hemispherical bowl has a variety of subtypes. The shallow ones very often are called *phialai* (Figure 95.2), the deeper ones that are sharply carinated with an everted rim, “Achaemenid bowls.”¹² The most commonly attested shape is the *phiale*, often *mesomphalic*, but the range of forms is extensive and a variety of decorative schemes is employed (Abka’i-Khavari 1988; Gunter and Root 1998: p. 18; Boardman 2000: p. 191). Horn-shaped *ryta* that incorporate animal heads or *protomes* in their lower parts are perhaps the most-often



Figure 95.2 New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 47.100.84: Example of a decorated silver phiale (“Achaemenid bowl”) [Public Domain Dedication: [https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/CC0 1.0 Universal \(CC0 1.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/CC0 1.0 Universal (CC0 1.0))].

illustrated examples of fine metalware and have come to be particularly associated with Achaemenid material culture (e.g. Ghirshman 1962; Shefton 1998: 643–666; Ebbinghaus 1999, 2000; Sideris 2008: pp. 343–344; Ebbinghaus 2018) (Figure 95.3).¹³ Amphora handles may also assume animal forms.

A wide variety of traditional techniques and decoration is attested in this material. Techniques include burnishing, “casting, hammering (free and on a matrix), embossing, engraving, chasing, and amalgam, leaf and foil gilding” (Sideris 2008: p. 340). In addition to three-dimensional animal forms (used almost exclusively on rhyta and amphora), decoration on metal vessels can include incised patterns (predominantly floral, especially lotus friezes and leaf patterns), lobes, flutes, and ribbing. Some silver vessels carry applied decoration in very thin gold foil (Moorey 1988). Figural imagery is rare, and occasionally the vessels carry inscriptions (mainly Aramaic, Old Persian, or Greek).

As noted, owing to the nature of the surviving record, we face serious challenges in attempting to classify gold and silver vessels, to date them, to identify sites of production and modes of distribution, and to understand the cultural significance of the phenomenon, both at micro and macro levels (e.g. Moorey 1988: pp. 236–237, 242–243; Özgen, Öztürk 1996: pp. 28–30,



Figure 95.3 New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 1989.281.30a,b: Example of a horn-shaped rhyton [Public Domain Dedication: [https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/CC0 1.0 Universal \(CC0 1.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/CC0 1.0 Universal (CC0 1.0))].

54–60; Treister 2015). A working assumption is that the finest quality work exhibiting stylistic features that can be documented in Persepolitan relief should represent the products of central court workshops, presumably located at the imperial capitals (e.g. Rehm 2010: pp. 164–171). This is an exercise in stylistic analysis, since only a few silver vessels have ever been excavated at an Achaemenid imperial capital. What artifacts one assigns to the court workshops will then dictate how one construes stylistic adaptations of the “peripheral” workshops. As Boardman (2000: pp. 184–186) notes, however, “court style” rhyta could be made far from the imperial centers, and artists need not be tied to a particular location. A similar point is made in Briant (1988), who mines the Classical sources to show in a dramatic fashion the huge amounts of precious metalware that flowed from and to the king in his travels. Thus, as Gunter and Root (1998: pp. 20–22) suggest, defining court and regional workshops of precious metalwork may be (for us) high impossible.

In addition to the problem of lack of provenanced vessels, the varied nature of the form and decoration of the surviving evidence allows for a variety of typologies and interpretations. Nevertheless, workshops have been posited for Sardis/Lydia (Melikian-Chirvani 1993: pp. 120–125; Özgen and Öztürk 1996: pp. 55–56; Boardman 2000: pp. 186–187; Treister 2007: pp. 92–97,

100; Sideris 2008: p. 343; Treister 2010: p. 238), somewhere in Ionia (Boardman 2000: pp. 191–192), somewhere in Anatolia (Pfrommer 1990: pp. 205, 208–209; Treister 1996: pp. 205–206, 2010: pp. 227, 238, 245 Ebbinghaus 2018: pp. 159–161, 186–187), the northern Aegean coast/Thrace (Painter 1989: pp. 75–76; Treister 1996: pp. 205–206, 210–211; Marazov 1998: pp. 150–151; Archibald 1998: pp. 179–184; Ebbinghaus 1999: pp. 388–397, 401–406; Treister 2010: pp. 239, 245 Ebbinghaus 2018: pp. 170–175, 187) or, more specifically, the Thracian Propontis (Marazov 1978: pp. 142–150; Treister 1996: pp. 211–213), various sites around the Black Sea (e.g. Treister 2007), and Armenia and Georgia (Melikian-Chirvani 1993: pp. 125–126), to mention only the most widely-cited locations.

From a broader perspective, one would like better to understand the significance of precious metalwork within the Achaemenid imperial milieu (e.g. Ebbinghaus 1999: pp. 407–422 for Thrace; Miller 2010; Ebbinghaus 2018: pp. 152, 155). One can envision multiple venues in which these vessels could have functioned: royal gifting (and all that is implied in such transactions), local emulation of court lifestyles, signals of allegiance to the imperial project, ritualized drinking and dining, conspicuous consumption (when deployed in burials), purveyors of imperial ideology, local self-presentation of wealth, status, and political power, wealth storage, etc. There is a possibility that the state controlled some aspects of the production of gold and silver vessels (Gunter, Root 1998: pp. 22–23). Many have often wondered whether the absence of phialai and horn-shaped animal rhyta in the Apadana reliefs signifies royal control over distribution (Gunter and Root 1998: pp. 26–28). The suggestion that the weights of precious metalware (both Greek and Achaemenid) somehow correspond to coinage weights is a matter of some dispute (e.g. Vickers, Gill 1994: pp. 33–52; Gunter and Root 1998: pp. 8–9; Zournatzi 2000: pp. 687–688; Simpson 2005: p. 108; cf. Miller 1997: pp. 60–61; Sideris 2008: p. 341).

One of the most significant caches of silver metalware and gold, silver, and electrum jewelry from the Achaemenid period is the famous “Lydian Hoard” (Özgen and Öztürk 1996). It is a case study in the problems inherent in the study of Achaemenid toreutics. The material, looted in the 1960s from at least four burial tumuli in the Uşak-Güre region, an area that lay in eastern ancient Lydia, eventually made its way through illicit channels to North America where it was purchased by dealers and then, finally, the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The museum, forced by legal action brought by the Turkish Republic, eventually returned the objects to Turkey in 1993.

The metalwork in the hoard constitutes a virtual catalogue raisonné of artifact types associated with Achaemenid toreutics (Melikian-Chirvani 1993): pitchers, ladles, phialai, bowls, goblets, spoons, alabastra, signet rings, bracelets, necklaces, earrings, pendants, fibulae, pins, and clothing appliqués. The artifact types exhibit a wide range of forms and styles, representing, depending on one’s opinion,

Phrygian, East Greek, Lydian, Lycian, Carian, and/or Achaemenid traditions (e.g. Melikian-Chirvani 1993: pp. 120–125; Özgen and Öztürk 1996: pp. 55–56, 58; Boardman 2000: p. 191). Most of the material was assigned a date c. 530–470 BC, based upon stylistic analysis and the discovery of a Persian siglos in the dromos of a tumulus at İkiztepe during salvage excavations (Özgen and Öztürk 1996: pp. 29–30). Various workshops have been postulated.

In addition to gold and silver, bronze was also used as a material to form various types of vessels, plates, jewelry, furniture fittings, etc., as well as a wide array of decorated tools, weapons, and horse trappings in the Achaemenid period (Moorey 1971).

Jewelry

As with precious metalware of the Achaemenid period, so, too, with gold and silver jewelry: the Greek sources frequently remark on the luxurious manner in which Persians adorned themselves with a wide assortment of jewelry (Moorey 1985: p. 857; 1998: p. 167); there are many problems of provenance, forgeries, and dating that complicate any attempts at identifying regional and court styles, stylistic development through time, typological categories, patterns of distribution, and the general significance of precious jewelry.

The corpus of jewelry that can be attributed to the Achaemenid period is quite small, but individual examples are often of an exceptionally high quality of craftsmanship (e.g. Amandry 1958; Rehm 1992; Musche 1992: pp. 260–285; Moorey 1998; Curtis 2005: pp. 132–148; Treister 2010: pp. 245–248). Fortunately, there is a handful of excavated caches of jewelry that allow a glimpse into possible typical assemblages, and, as mentioned, the reliefs from the Apadana provide some evidence. The two most prominent hoards of jewelry within Iran are from Pasargadae (Stronach 1978: pp. 168–177, figs. 85–88, pls. 146–156) and the famous burial on the Acropole at Susa (Frank 2010).¹⁴

The most common surviving objects of jewelry, often in gold and/or silver (and electrum), are bracelets (Figure 95.4), armlets, torques, earrings, necklaces and pectorals, beads, and clothing appliqués. As with metalware, these object types have a long pedigree in earlier periods.¹⁵ By far and away the most famous and often illustrated items of jewelry from the Achaemenid period are penannular bracelets (Figure 95.4) and armlets with animal-head/protome terminals (Rehm 1992: pp. 13–70). The bracelets often have omega-shaped hoops, a particularly distinctive trait of the period. The animal-head/protome terminals are at times magnificent; the menagerie is varied, including lions, bird-headed lions, bulls, rams, goats, gazelles, ibexes, antelopes, and ducks; the quadrupeds are often winged. The most common form of earring in the period is also a penannular hoop (Rehm 1992: pp. 139–171); the more extravagant



Figure 95.4 London, British Museum 124017: Gold penannular armlet from the Oxus Treasure (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Armlet_from_the_Oxus_Treasure_BM_1897.12-31.116.jpg; Photo Maire-Lan Nguyen).

ones have cloisonné, filigree, and/or granulation decoration and suspended pendants, often with figural imagery (e.g. Curtis 2005: nos. 173–175 from the Pasargadae hoard). Necklaces generally have gold, stone, and/or faïence beads and pendants. A variety of stones is found: turquoise, carnelian, agate, jasper, amethyst, and lapis lazuli being some of the most commonly attested.

Artisans employed a wide variety of techniques for jewelry. A common feature of the period is the use of polychrome inlays: colored stone (e.g. turquoise, lapis lazuli, carnelian), glass, faïence, and, perhaps, enamel (Moorey 1998; Curtis 2005: p. 132). In some cases, the inlay includes figural decoration (e.g. the gold roundels from the Susa tomb [Curtis and Tallis 2005: no. 271]). Techniques for inlay include cloisonné, filigree, granulation, encrustation, and very delicate wire-work decoration.

Other Minor Arts

Other categories of objects that may be appended to the assemblage of Achaemenid minor arts include stoneware, cast glass vessels, carved ivory, terracottas, and textiles. Of carved ivory, terracottas, and textiles, little can be said by way of broad overview owing to the sparseness of the surviving record.¹⁶

Of glassware and stoneware we are somewhat better informed. Luxury glass vessels of the Achaemenid period often exhibit very similar features of form and decoration to those in precious metal; shapes include, e.g. animal-headed rhyta, phialai, deep bowls, alabastra, chalices, and bottles.¹⁷ These luxury glass vessels often were decorated on their exteriors with petals, lobes, fluting, etc. Glass workshops also produced multicolored beads, amulets, and inlays that were used in jewelry. Glass vessels, like those in precious metal, occur also in tomb assemblages (e.g. the Susa tomb [Curtis and Tallis 2005: no. 279]).

The Treasury at Persepolis yielded a relatively large collection of stone vessels, most of which had been deliberately smashed, presumably at the time of the destruction of the site by Alexander (Schmidt 1957: pp. 53–56, 81–91, pls. 47–65; Cahill 1985: pp. 382–383; Simpson 2005: pp. 108–109). Shapes include serving trays, palettes, bowls, and plates, some of which incorporate animal heads/protomes, and some 269 mortars and pestles. A wide variety of materials is documented in this assemblage, including rock crystal, lapis lazuli, porphyry, serpentine, diorite, granite, hematite, slate, marble, green chert, and limestone. Inscriptions are not uncommon on these stone objects from Persepolis; in some cases they indicate that the objects pre-date the Achaemenid period. There has been much discussion (some quite fanciful) on the function and significance of the green chert mortars, pestles, and plates, which carry Aramaic inscriptions in ink (Bowman 1970; Cahill 1985: p. 382; Briant 2002: pp. 433, 940–941).

NOTES

- 1 Note the comments of Stein (2014: p. 282) concerning the “common language of portable elite material culture” across the empire.
- 2 Relevant to the discussion here also are clothing (see Chapter 74 Clothes and Insignia) and official Achaemenid coinage (see Chapter 57 Royal Coinage).
- 3 For issues surrounding this question, see, e.g., Briant and Boucharlat (2005); Ivantchik and Licheli (2007); Delemen (2007); Tuplin (2008).
- 4 Cf. Boardman (2000: p. 150), who remarks that the term “pretends too much”; also Treister (2007: pp. 97–101 and 2015).
- 5 Miller (1997: pp. 135–152) articulates a similar model in her analysis of the multifaceted receptivity of Attic pottery to Achaemenid gold and silver vessels: imitation; adaptation; derivation.
- 6 Excavations at Susa (see below) have yielded a few examples of imperial Achaemenid glyptic, but the other capitals, Pasargadae and Ekbatana, are almost completely silent.
- 7 See Garrison (2013); the one outlier is the date palm, a constant feature of imperial Achaemenid glyptic but never documented in monumental relief.

- 8 The fact that most of the seals traditionally assigned to Graeco-Persian style(s) are unprovenanced also is a problem. Gates (2002: pp. 110–118) tracks the scholarly debate on the use of the term Graeco-Persian within the context of ethno-stylistic affiliation.
- 9 Kaptan (2002: p. 107) identifies DS 2 as the only example of the Court Style at Daskyleion. Other seals that have close affinities to the Persepolitan Court Style are DS 5, DS 8, DS 9, DS 12, and DS 14.
- 10 Cut glass and stone vessels were also part of the material used for luxury tablewares (see below).
- 11 Hamadan (ancient Ekbatana) is a site much favored by antiquities dealers looking to forge a provenance for an artifact. For an overview of the Hamadan problem, see Muscarella (1977, 1980: pp. 31–35) and Gunter and Root (1998: pp. 4–8) concerning the four famous silver phialai that carry OP inscriptions naming Artaxerxes I.
- 12 Gunter and Root (1998: pp. 24–26) discuss the use of Greek terms, such as phiale, to describe Iranian vessel types and the resulting ambiguity as regards form, function, interpretive strategies, etc.
- 13 See Marazov (1978) and Ebbinghaus (1999: pp. 388–389 and 2018) on rhyta. Ebbinghaus (1999: p. 389 note 2) identifies three types of rhyta in the Achaemenid period: vertical beaker and protome at right angle; tall, more, or less straight bent beaker; horned-shaped variants.
- 14 See also Moorey (1985: p. 857) for a list of the principal excavated hoards of jewelry from the Achaemenid period.
- 15 The exception is the pectoral, which was introduced into ancient western Asia by the Achaemenids from Egypt (Curtis 2005: p. 134).
- 16 See, e.g., Moorey (1985: pp. 863–884) for glass and ivory; Amiet (2010: pp. 353–355 and 358–362) for stoneware and carved ivory from Susa; Moorey (2000) for the so-called terracotta Persian riders, which are found across the empire.
- 17 See, e.g., von Saldern (1963); Oliver (1970); Goldstein (1980); Moorey (1985: pp. 863–864); Simpson (2005: p. 108); Kakhidze (2007) on the small corpus of Iranian glass kohl bottles; Triantafyllidis (2008) on luxury glass from Rhodes; Ignatiadou (2010) on colorless glass vessels of the Achaemenid period; Simpson (2005: pp. 107–108, and nos. 113–114 and 121) for a glass rhyton excavated at Persepolis; Schmidt (1957: pp. 91–93, pls. 66–67) for glass vessels from the Treasury at Persepolis.

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FURTHER READING

- There is no monographic treatment of Achaemenid glyptic (see the bibliography in Chapter 56 Seals and Sealing).
- Garrison, M.B., Root, M.C. (2001). *Seals on the Persepolis Fortification Tablets: Volume I: Images of Heroic Encounter* (Oriental Institute Publications 117). Chicago: University of Chicago Press. A broad overview of the archival evidence.

d'Amore, P. (1992). Glittica a cilindro achemenide: Linee di uno sviluppo tematico-cronologic. *Contributi e Materiali di Archeologia Orientale*, 4, pp. 187–267. Surveys a large number of published seals (as versus seal impressions) from the period.

There is no single publication that adequately addresses metalwork of the Achaemenid period.

Curtis, J., Tallis, N. (eds.) (2005). *Forgotten Empire: The World of Ancient Persia*. London: The British Museum Press. Excellent overview of Achaemenid material culture, addressing all artifact types discussed in this chapter.

Ebbinghaus, S. (ed.) (2018). *Animal-Shaped Vessels from the Ancient World: Feasting with Gods, Heroes, and Kings*. Cambridge: Harvard Art Museums. An excellent introduction to ancient drinking vessels and practices across time and cultures.

Musche, B. (1992). *Vorderasiatischer Schmuck von den Anfängen bis zur Zeit der Achaemeniden (ca. 10,000–330 v. Chr.)* (Handbuch der Orientalistik 7:1:2B:5). Leiden: Brill.

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CHAPTER 96

Poetry, Music, and Dance

Bruno Jacobs

Music, poetry, and dance are, by their nature, hardly reflected in the archaeological record, unless, for example, by representations of dance or musical performances or by the discovery of actual musical instruments. But the conventions of Achaemenid art do not favor scenes of this sort, and hardly any musical instruments have been found. In these circumstances one is in danger of overrating visual art at the expense of less adequately documented artistic disciplines, and interpretations of pictures frequently worm out of objects a content that they are neither intended nor able to sustain (Jacobs 2002; see Chapter 55 Achaemenid Art – Art in the Achaemenid Empire).

Strabo reports that acquaintance with poetry was part of the education of Persians aged between 5 and 25 and that “both without and with song they recite the deeds of the gods and the noblest men” (15.3.18; Kuhrt 2007: 13.8/II). Taken literally, this passage indicates that epic poetry about gods and heroes was part of the curriculum; and the existence of a broader range of literary genres is suggested by Strabo’s reference to a song that praised 360 usage categories of the palm tree (16.1.14). But other evidence about literature is hard to locate within this range, especially since there is apt to be no information about literary form.

All the same, Klima’s view that the Persians had once had “national songs, namely heroic sagas, myths and similar works” is still valid (1968: pp. 23; the

best-known instance, according to Klima, is the story of Zariadres and Odatis, told by Athenaeus [13.575a–f] after Chares of Mytilene), and it may be assumed that epic literature is reflected in various Classical authors, not only in Herodotus but also and especially in the work of Ctesias and even in Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* (Gershevitch 1968: p. 10; Nagel 1982: pp. 157–158).¹ Whether any kind of historical chronicle existed already in Achaemenid times is another matter: such a thing may be mentioned in the biblical book of Esther, where we learn that the “Book of records of chronicles” was read before king Ahasuerus (= Xerxes I?) when he was unable to get to sleep (Esther 6.1; cf. Klíma 1968: p. 23; Knauth and Nadjmabadi 1975: p. 122), but the cogency of this evidence remains very uncertain. The passage recalls the *basilika apomnemoneumata* mentioned by Agathias (4.30), which were perhaps identical with the *Khwadāy nāmag*, the “Book of Lords,” an historical compendium of Sasanian times compiled during the reign of Khosrau I. This is frequently taken to have been a basic source for Ferdowsi's *Šāhnāmeḥ*, the “Book of Kings,” but Davidson has pointed out that the sources of the *Šāhnāmeḥ* lay in oral poetry, not written texts (Davidson 2005: pp. 267–272): the work's validity depended on its transmission of the lore of wise and pious men. In this context Davidson also draws attention to the prominence of the *gōšān* in Parthian times (cf. Boyce 1957: pp. 17–18) – a figure who was musician as well as poet and (as a musician) both instrumentalist and singer. There are hints that such figures existed in Achaemenid times, too (Davidson 2005: p. 272). Dinon, for instance, provides information about a certain Angares, who was the most respected singer at Astyages' court (see Ath. 14.633d). There is nothing awkward about the fact that this man is situated at the Median court: we may assume the presence of such specialists at the Achaemenid court as well, most likely in the context of festive banquets (Ath. 545f). Other sources report that on occasions of this kind a choir of women performed, singing with instrumental accompaniment (Heraclid.Cum. FGrHist 689 F2 = Ath. IV 145d; cf. Plut., Mor. 140b; cf. Briant 1996: p. 306), and 329 female musicians feature in the so-called *Letter of Parmenio*, a document in which Parmenio provided Alexander the Great with a list of the staff he had taken over in Damascus from the property of Darius III (Ath. 13.607f–608a). A similarly large number of female vocalists and harpists is said to have watched over the Great King at night, singing and playing as they did so (Ath. 12.514b). With all due caution, Naveh and Shaked consider the possibility that one of the Khalili documents from Bactria (C 4:13) mentions a group of male youths who were “performer[s] of melodies” (Naveh and Shaked 2012: pp. 203, 209).

The deeds of Cyrus the Great seem to have entered the repertoire of singers at quite an early date. The king was lauded (so Xenophon says) because of his beauty, accessibility, thirst for knowledge, and ambition (Cyr. 1.2.1; cf. 1.4.25); and Herodotus had already remarked on the fact that various versions

of Cyrus' life and deeds were in circulation (1.95). These narrations were apt to draw upon established literary patterns, as, for example, in the story of Cyrus being abandoned as a baby and brought up by a bitch (Binder 1964: pp. 1–21; cf. Jacobs 1996: pp. 85–92).

Another such literary pattern occurs in Cicero's report that Cyrus had a dream in which he bent down three times and tried in vain to grasp the sun – three futile attempts that were interpreted as foretelling a reign of three decades (Cic. div. 1.23.46). In this narrative we recognize a model also represented in the story of the Turian villain Fraŋrasyan, who dived three times into the lake Vouru.kaša- in an unsuccessful attempt to get the Khvarnah and so take power (Yt. 19, 56–64; cf. Jacobs 1987: p. 227).

Sagas about gods and heroes of the sort postulated for the west are indirectly visible in an Avestan tradition that certainly existed in eastern Iran during the Achaemenid epoch and may have existed even earlier (see Chapter 84 Zoroastrianism vs. Mazdaism in this context). Whereas Thieme (1957: p. 95) spoke of the Gathas preserving “magisch kräftige Wahrheitsformulierung” and Humbach (1959: pp. 71–72) called them prayer-hymns (on the prosody of the Gathian-Avestan texts Kellens and Pirart 1988: pp. 89–93), the Avestan Yašts were seen by Thieme (1957: p. 95) as sacral banquet poetry, whose task was to spread the glory of the gods and ancestors, and Gershevitch (1968: p. 23) stated that anything in them that did not deal directly with the gods referred to Zarathustra and ancient heroes and kings.

Performing ballads dealing with gods and heroes was clearly also a task for the magi. Thus Curtius Rufus 5.1.22 reports that it was one of their responsibilities to sing songs to glorify the king. Mostly, however, they served the gods, and the texts they used for this purpose were evidently normally sung.² Strabo (15.3.14) mentions protracted incantations by the magi during religious ceremonies, and Catullus (*Poem* 90) takes for granted that Persian ritual involves song. Herodotus (1.132) says that magi sang so-called “theogonies” during sacrifices and reports that they pacified a storm near the river Strymon with an offering and “singing incantations with loud shouts” (Hdt. 7.191). According to Curtius Rufus (3.3.9), magi sang an ancestral song (*patrium carmen*) during the march of Darius III to Issus (De Jong 1997: pp. 362–364).

At one point in *Cyropaedia* Xenophon reports that Cyrus sang hymns to the gods every day (Xen. Cyr. 8.1.23). It is hard to say how much knowledge lies behind this statement, but it may offer a parallel to Assurbanipal, who called himself an expert in the art of *kalūtu*, i.e. of ritual singing (Lanfranchi 2011: pp. 216–217; cf. Ctes. in Diod. 2.23.2).

Primary sources that might allow us to test such a suggestion are missing, however, as is primary evidence about music at the Achaemenid court in general. For a time, it is true, there seemed to be written testimony about a trombonist in the Persepolis Fortification Archive (PF 1343: 3–4; NN 0904: 3–5; possibly

also PF 1245: 2–4) – presumably somebody whose job was to give a signal on appropriate occasions³ – but the interpretation has, with good reason, been discarded by Henkelman (2002: pp. 1–16). The fact that – with the exception of a bronze trumpet found near tomb V at Persepolis by A. Sami (1954: p. 86) – original instruments have not been recovered may be mere chance. The absence of depictions in monumental art is surely due to the conventions of Achaemenid court art, and the same must be true for glyptics. From immediately pre-Achaemenid times, by contrast, there are well-known representations of musicians and their instruments in monuments of various categories and provenance (Kul-i Farah 1: Potts 2010: p. 137 Pl. 4; seal, Louvre Sb 6281: Amiet 1966: Fig. 417; cup from Arjan, frieze 4: Álvarez-Mon 2010: Pl. 63. 64. 66c).

Like music, dance also had its place in both religious and profane contexts. Athenaeus and Eustathius cite Duris for the information that on the occasion of the Mithras feast the king got drunk and danced a solo *Persikon* (Ath. 10.434e; Eust. Od. 18.3 [1834.6]; cf. Xen. Cyr. 8.4.12. Kuhrt 2007: pp. 565–567 refers to Xen. Anab. 6.1.10, where the *Persikon* is apparently envisaged as a war dance with flute accompaniment); and Athenaeus (10.434e) adds that Persians learned dancing like riding, demonstrating how typically Persian this form of self-expression was considered to be.⁴ The Persians are also said to have been convinced that dancing led to physical strength.

Dancing was part of the entertainment at formal court banquets (Xen. Cyr. 1.3.10) and was apparently valued as an esthetic and artistic skill. Thus Artaxerxes II, for example, had a favorite dancer in the shape of the Cretan Zenon (Ctes. in Ath. 1.22c; cf. Jacobs 2010: pp. 390–391).

If one wishes to assess properly the significance of music, poetry, and dance (and so to compensate for their absence from the archeological tradition), one can do no better than stress how frequently they are mentioned in the written sources. The contrast with the poor showing of the visual arts in such sources is a telling sign of their status.

NOTES

- 1 The arguments adduced by Balcer (1994), that in the Achaemenid inscriptions epic tradition is reflected, seem to be too unspecific.
- 2 The stereotypical association of magi and singing may be palpable in the Derveni papyrus, Col. VI 2, even if the word *magi* here is aimed at Greek professionals (Kouremenos et al. 2006: pp. 72–73, 130, 166–168).
- 3 A presumably bronze signal instrument, which admittedly cannot be better detailed, is mentioned in Strab. 15.3.18.
- 4 The association of Persians and dance may have entailed that in scenes on Attic red-figured vases and on imitations thereof, which seemingly reflect Greek festival customs, dancers perform in oriental costume (Raeck 1981: p. 328 nos. 605, 607–612).

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author is very grateful to Christopher Tuplin for his assistance with the English version of this chapter and for valuable hints.

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SECTION XII

RECEPTION AND HERITAGE

SECTION XII.A

MODES OF PERCEPTION

CHAPTER 97

The Perspectives of Greek and Latin Sources

Reinhold Bichler

The Place of the Achaemenid Empire in a Global-Historical Perspective

The Persian Empire has its firmly embedded position in our traditional view of the course of history. Graeco-Roman and Judaeo-Christian tradition are significantly responsible for this.

The role of Cyrus as founder of the empire is already explicit in Aeschylus' tragedy. As a result of the conquest of the Phrygians and Lydians as well as of Ionia, the whole of Asia was subject to one man (*Persae* 759–771). Herodotus broadened the perspective. Before the era of Cyrus, Asia was comprised of three great kingdoms: the empire of the Lydians in western Asia Minor, the empire of the Medes in the rear part of Asia, and the empire of the Assyrians, whose power in its last phase was limited to Babylonia. Cyrus' son and successor, Cambyses, gained control of Egypt, Cyprus, and parts of Libya. Though he is traditionally deemed to be the prototype of an outrageous despot, the rapid growth of the Persian Empire could not be overlooked. After Cambyses' death, the continuity of government was indeed in question for a short time, until Darius was able to assert himself as a new powerful ruler (Bichler and Rollinger 2002; Rollinger et al. 2011).

There is a debate going on in modern research as to what extent the rule of the Achaemenid Darius marked an interruption in the dynastic continuity and a cultural break with the rule of the Teispids, i.e. the family of Cyrus (II) and his father Cambyses (I), whose governance was still shaped considerably by Elamite tradition (Henkelman 2011a; Jacobs 2011). The identity of Cambyses' successor, Bardiya/Smerdis, who was supported by the influential group of the Magians, also remains a subject of dispute (Rollinger 1998; on the variant ancient traditions cf. Shayegan 2012, pp. 1–41). In Herodotus' wittily told story of Darius' way to power, the king acts with machiavellian cunning. By claiming that as a member of the royal family of Cyrus he had liberated the Persians from the reign of a Median usurper, as documented in the great Behistun Inscription, he also won over Herodotus. The latter perceives the whole of the Persian royal dynasty as Achaemenids, descended from the tribe of the Pasargadae (1.125.4; cf. 3.65.6; 75.1). Darius' son and successor, Xerxes, can pride himself on his nine ancestors, including the names of Cyrus, Cambyses, and Teispes (7.11.2). The unrest following the death of Cambyses was an interlude. The continuity of a great ruling tradition, starting with King Cyrus, from now on characterizes the outward appearance of the Persian Empire.

From a Greek perspective it was possible to glorify the military victories against Xerxes' invasion army and the enemy fleet in magnificent works of literature. But there was no doubt about the continued existence of the enormous territory. In the course of the Peloponnesian War and the ensuing struggle for hegemony, the Great Kings and their satraps even succeeded in exerting increasing influence on inner-Greek relations. The influential but now lost work of Ctesias of Cnidus, dating from the fourth century BCE, may have presented the Persian system of rule in somewhat somber colors. Ctesias' portraits of the Persian kings were far from flattering. However, despite all court intrigues, the Persian kings preserve an age-old heritage. Ctesias – in deliberate opposition to Herodotus – had rewritten the early stages of Persian rule and shaped them highly imaginatively. According to his conceptual idea, initially the Assyrians and then the Medes ruled over Asia as direct predecessors of the Persians, the former for about 1300–1360 years (Diodorus 2.21.8; 28.8), the latter for 282 years, up to the accession of their last king, Astyages (Diodorus 2.32.5; 34.1). Ctesias' conception of how the kingdoms in Asia succeeded one another set a precedent (Wiesehöfer et al. 2011; Waters 2020). So, when Alexander defeated King Darius III, the resumption of this tradition became an issue.

To what extent Alexander should be perceived as the last Achaemenid has become the subject of debate in current research (Lane Fox 2007; Wiemer 2007; Briant 2010). For the ancient authors it went without saying that he came into a historical inheritance. In Curtius' biography of Alexander, Darius, just before the beginning of the decisive battle at Arbela (Gaugamela), looks

back over a great history: for 230 years the gods have bestowed good fortune on the Persian Empire. Now there is about to be a turn of events (4.14.20). Arrian describes how Alexander pays his respect to King Cyrus, the founder of the empire, in Pasargadae (6.29.4–11). However, the new empire that Alexander had established fell apart rapidly in the Wars of the Diadochi. Seleucid rule over Babylonia led to growing interest in the country's glorious historical past under the kings Nabopolassar and Nebuchadnezzar. Herodotus still had some recollection of sovereign kingship in Babylonia after the fall of the Assyrian capital Ninus/Niniveh (Assur seems to have been unknown). Ctesias, meanwhile, regarded Babylonia as a kind of satrapy, first of the Assyrians, then of the Medes. Henceforth this conception was presumably adjusted to the new power relations (Madreiter 2011). It was probably under the influence of the historical recollection of Babylonia's role that the famous conceptual idea of four great empires succeeding one another came into existence, a notion that takes shape in the Judaeo-Hellenistic Book of Daniel (Wiesehöfer 2003). According to this idea, Babylonian, Median, and Persian rule preceded the fourth empire, the one under the reign of Alexander and his successors. In the course of conflicts during imperial times, Jews and Christians perceived Rome as the fourth empire in Daniel's prophecies, which was to be followed by the expected end of days. Hieronymus' commentary on Daniel firmly established the conceptual schema of the four empires, in which the Persians rank as the predecessors of the Macedonians, in the body of tradition that was passed down in Christian late antiquity (Hieronymus, *In Daniele* 2.7.8; Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 20.23; cf. Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica* 15 fr.1).

But the Achaemenid Persian Empire had also been allocated its place in "pagan" historiography. Very soon after their first victories over the Antigonids and Seleucids, the Romans were able to see themselves as Alexander's heirs and thus also the inheritors of the Persians and their predecessors, the Medes and the Assyrians (cf. Aemilius Sura in Velleius Paterculus 1.6.6). A world history-oriented look back upon the times preceding Rome's rise to power was bound to take this period into account (Rollinger 2011). Diodorus' *Bibliothēke*, which covers the times up to Caesar, treats the history of the Persian Empire expansively. It is not related in one piece, though, but its sections are integrated into the progress of Greek-Macedonian history (Stronk 2017). A similar approach can be found in the historical work of Pompeius Trogus, which survived in an epitome by Justinus. Justinus wielded great influence. The most important work of Christian universal history in late antiquity, Orosius' *historia adversus paganos*, also drew on him. Its underlying idea is the progression of history from Babylon to Rome, guided by divine providence. In it, the history of the Persian Empire appears in unconnected portions only, but from a Christian perspective it remains an inherent part of world-historical orientation.

The Portrayal of the “Great” Kings from Cyrus to Xerxes

Cyrus entered the history books as a great founder figure. In an example of retrojection, Jewish tradition praises him as the initiator of repatriation after the Babylonian exile and the construction of the Second Temple (Ezra 1,1–4; 6,1–5). In Deutero-Isaiah he was elevated to the position of Messianic Savior (Isaiah 45,1–7, Kratz 1991). Although he subdued the cities in western Asia Minor, the Greeks retained admiring memories of him. As early as in Aischylus’ tragedy, his government appears as a happy era for the Persians (*Persae* 768–772). Herodotus compares him to a Father of the Persians (3.89.3). It is only late in life that he falls prey to hubris. Its first indications becomes apparent when he starts his campaign against Babylon. The lack of certainty about his death in the east then offered Herodotus the opportunity for a dramatic finale. Thirsting for ever more conquests, the king crosses the outermost boundaries of his realm and falls in the battle against the Massagetae and their queen, Tomyris. She became the prototype of the merciless female avenger (Bichler 2000; Rollinger 2004; cf. generally Shayegan 2020).

Ctesias’ version of his reign delineates an entirely different and quite resentful picture (F 8d–9). There is a resonance of his filigreed account of Cyrus and Astyages in the Byzantine excerpts from the *Universal History* written by Nicolaus of Damascus (Stronk 2010: pp. 73–84). Trogus/Justinus adopted elements from the modified history of the military campaigns. According to his version, the war against Croesus, king of Lydia, took place only a long time after the capture of Babylon (Justinus 1.7). But on the whole, Ctesias was not able to shake the monument of Cyrus’ greatness (Bichler 2011). Isocrates’ judgment that Evagoras, king of Salamis in Cyprus, deserved more fame and glory than the much-admired Cyrus (*Evagoras* 37) could not be taken seriously. Plato’s verdict that Cyrus, a great strategist, had left the education of his sons to women carried more weight. As a result, they had been rendered effeminate and been alienated from the strict Persian morals (*Nomoi* III 694c–695a). As early as in antiquity this assessment was considered a blow against Xenophon’s *Cyropaedia* (cf. Gellius, *Noctes Atticae* 14,3.1–4).

In this work, Xenophon had indeed molded the portrait of the founder of the empire into the idealized image of an Oriental monarch. The king personifies the merits that Xenophon had already introduced in considerable thematic differentiation as a model of male exemplary conduct in his earlier writings: proficiency in hunting and domestic affairs, military ethos, philosophical education, and humane governance. But it was crucial that Cyrus was now also credited with those institutions on which the strength of Persian rule is based, in the first place the organization of the satrapies and the regular

control of their administration (8.6.1–17). In the *Cyropaedia*, the idealistic conceptions of early-Spartan lifestyle blend in with the perception of Persian institutions, resulting in the portrayal of a fictitious state. Xenophon's model of successful rule over a realm that was considered the largest and most beautiful in Asia (8.8.1) met with a remarkable reception. But there is also the concluding part of the *Cyropaedia* in which Xenophon contrasts his portrayal of Cyrus' extant qualities as a very successful monarch with the contemporary situation (8.8). Its depiction is characterized by typical clichés about the decadence of the Persians and belittles the military capacity of the empire. The big death scene, in which Cyrus admonishes his Persians to adhere to the rigid morals (8.7.6–26; cf. Ctesias F 9(8) Stronk), did not produce a lasting effect (Tatum 1989; Ambler 2001: pp. 1–18; Tuplin 2004; Flower 2017).

Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* was perceived as the idealistic portrayal of just reign, not as a piece of history (cf. Cicero, *ad Quintum fratrem* 1.1.23). Thus it was possible that gruesome versions of Cyrus' death in enemy country kept circulating (cf. Diodorus 2.44.2: the queen of the Scythians had him crucified). Above all, what Plato put forward exerted a big influence (see above): Cyrus' son and successor Cambyses was viewed as a paradigm of a despot. The general features of his portrait were determined by Herodotus. Cambyses' striving for conquering new territory was boundless. His plan to follow up his conquest of Egypt with an advance on the pious Ethiopians at the southern edge of the world failed miserably. The king eventually lost all sense of proportion and set despotism above respect for the traditional mores. He committed outrages at sacred sites in Egypt, raged against both Egyptians and Persians, and in his paranoia wiped out his own family. Behind Herodotus' dramatic account we can assume reactions to the conquest of Egypt and the harsh measures adopted to enforce sovereignty. It was not by accident that similar atrocities were held against Artaxerxes III, who was able to subdue Egypt again after a prolonged period of independence (404/2–343/2) (Henkelman 2011b: pp. 129–132; Vittmann 2011; Wasmuth 2017).

Cambyses' campaign extended the Persian Empire substantially. Cyprus and the regions bordering on Cyrenaica fell to the new reign. The somber portrayal of the despot, however, had gained acceptance and was subsequently open to modification and access as desired. Admittedly, Ctesias' *Persica* depicted a largely mitigated portrait of the king (F 13(9–14)), but this reverse characterization did not assert itself. The unclear circumstances of Cambyses' death and the identity of his short-time successor also contributed to this. They already gave Herodotus the opportunity for a striking presentation of Darius' way to the throne. Here, too, Ctesias offered a variant diverging in names and details. But the basic pattern of perception did not vary and drew on the reception of Darius' legitimacy to power (Bichler 2011). The usurpation of the throne by a Magian threatened the continuity of the Persian

Empire. But Darius, assisted by six co-conspirators, succeeded in bringing down the usurper. With the help of a manipulated horse oracle he ascended the throne (cf. Herodotus 3.84–87; Ctesias F 13[17]; Rollinger 2018).

None of Herodotus' royal portraits reveals as great complexity as the one of Darius. Although Herodotus views Darius critically, he pays respect to the Achaemenid's claim for absolute power, as it is laid down in the royal inscriptions and the respective bas-reliefs: Darius is the efficient organizer of a tremendously large empire whose resources come from all over the world and seem to be inexhaustible. However, the greatness and splendor of the empire are as ambivalent as the character of its ruler. In the famous discussion about the best form of government (3.80–83), the future monarch argues like a shrewd sophist. He tricks his way to the throne. The organization of satrapies serves the accumulation of tax money and reminds Herodotus' reading public of the only too familiar tribute payments in the Delian League (Ruffing 2009). The Great King tends to these revenues like a monger and personally watches over the treasures hoarded. Generosity mingles with despotic demeanor. Likewise, a look at his military achievements shows an ambivalent result. In the east the king extended his dominion as far as the Indus River (cf. 4.44). Samos was captured with an iron fist. The Babylonian revolt was suppressed and punished cruelly (3.159). His confidant Megabazos seized the cities of Thrace and enlarged the influence of the Great King as far as Macedon. A venture against the Scythians, however, which is regarded as a prequel to the great campaign launched by Xerxes, failed. Aryandes, who had been entrusted with an intervention in Cyrenaica, missed his secret goal of subjugating the Libyans (4.167). The Ionian Revolt, to which the Athenians made their dire contribution, admittedly ended with the fall of Miletus (494 BCE). But at Marathon it was the Athenians that finally prevailed (490 BCE).

The victory at Marathon was built up – above all in Athens – into the glorious defense of Hellenic freedom. Following this perspective, later interpretation of history developed the concept of antagonism between European freedom and Asiatic despotism (cf. generally Buraselis and Koulakiotis 2013). This perception of the event, however, did not supersede the portrait of Darius as a successful organizer of a great empire, as Herodotus had left it to posterity. In contrast, Ctesias' rather puny portrait of this king (cf. F 13[19–23]) remained without effect. Although Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*, for reasons consistent with the logic of its intention, backdated the management of the empire into the era of its founder, the impact of Herodotus' depiction could not be diminished. The established portrait of Darius remained complex and shows the ambivalence of concentrated power. In a representation of Ancient Egypt, based on Hecataeus of Abdera (c. 300 BCE), Darius is acknowledged as a great legislator and appreciated because of his pious disposition (Diodorus 1.95.4).

In the same vein, Flavius Josephus esteems the king's sympathy for Judaism (*Antiquitates* 11.3.1; 5.1; 15.11.2).

Darius' successor Xerxes had a more difficult lot. In his *Persians*, Aeschylus had already delineated Xerxes as a pitiful figure (in contrast to Darius, who is still portrayed as an impressive character): fallen from lofty heights, a victim of poor advisers and his own hubris. The despot, who disregarded the boundaries of nature, had fetters thrown into the waters of the Hellespont and had Mount Athos dug through, suffers a humiliating defeat with his vast army. Aeschylus, from an Athenian perspective, focuses on the victory at Salamis and brings Marathon to mind. The basic interpretive pattern of the defensive success, however, lent itself to a broad reception: the freedom of Hellas has been defended against a superior power from Asia, which is under the control of *one* man (cf. *Persae* 241 f.; pp. 402–405) (Föllinger 2009: pp. 53–76; Garvie 2009).

Herodotus' portrayal of Xerxes had to take this interpretive pattern into account. In the history of reception the critical tone that is clearly perceptible at least in the subtext of the *Histories* was not paid attention to for a long time (although Plutarch in his essay *de malignitate Herodoti* found it irritating). For Herodotus looked upon the glorious past, in which an alliance of Hellenic powers had been able to withstand a seemingly superior aggressor, against the background of his own time, a period in which Athens and Sparta were entangled in a frightful internal war that affected large parts of Hellas and that was even about to escalate. Herodotus' description of despotism in the Persian Empire can also be viewed as a distorting mirror which reflects Athens' imperialist policy (Moles 2002; Lincoln 2012: pp. 283–288; Irwin 2013). There is no consensus on this in historical research, though. At any rate, Herodotus' Xerxes also performs actions that are not in keeping with the portrayal of the weak and wanton despot. He can show generosity and put Athens' later policy to shame (7.136–137). And although he commits heinous deeds during his campaign, he also shows indications of religious respect (7.54; 8.54). But Herodotus' account of Xerxes' regime ends in a moral debacle. The king, who wanted to make the Persians masters of the world, is not even capable of asserting his authority against the intrigues of womenfolk in his own house. Ctesias, who provided a largely differing presentation of the Greco-Persian wars, also "corrected" the portrayal of Xerxes as it had been given by Herodotus. Since he ascribed the harsh suppression of the Babylonian revolt to him as well (F 13[26]), which, according to Herodotus, Darius was responsible for, he only contributed to the corroboration of the prevalent negative image. It was this image that Callisthenes employed in promoting Alexander's expedition against Darius III as a Panhellenic retaliation campaign. In order to find unreserved praise in Greek language with regard to Xerxes' piety, Jewish tradition must be resorted to (Josephus, *Antiquitates* 11.5.1). By contrast, several literary attempts at regarding the campaigns of

490 and 480/79 BCE from a (pseudo-)Persian viewpoint and rating them as successful show significant streaks of irony (Dion Chrysostomos 11.149; Philostrat, *Vita Apollonii* 1.25).

An entirely different view of the unexpected victories against Xerxes' invasion army, however, turned out to be of historical impact. As early as in Simonides' poems as well as in Aeschylus' *Persians* the fighters for Hellenic freedom were compared to Homer's mythical heroes. The battles at Salamis and Plataea subsequently developed into identity-establishing points of reference which Panhellenic political rhetoric took up in order to extend the geopolitical dimension of the threat (Schmal 1995: pp. 74–119; Hutzfeld 1999; Boedeker and Singer 2001). In 470 BCE Pindar praised Hiero, ruler of Syracuse, for his victories over Carthaginian together with Phoenician and Etruscan military formations on land, at Himera/Sicily (480 BCE), and at sea, near Cumae in southern Italy (474 BCE). He was the savior who had rescued Hellas from the humiliation of servitude. Pindar here puts these victories and the triumphs at Salamis and Plataea on equal footing (*Pythian* 1.72–80). Herodotus broadened the perspective once again. On the one hand he grasped the Persian Wars in a paradigmatic way as a coherent event that originated in the Ionian Revolt, but on the other he viewed the threat posed by Xerxes' army as directed against the whole of the oikoumene (esp. cf. 7.8b–c; 53.2). Thus he integrated the Battle of Himera into a series of battles on land and at sea that seemed fatefully synchronized with one another: in each case, the breakthrough of the Persians at Thermopylae and at Artemisium (8.15.1), the victories at Plataea and at Mycale (9.100), and also the victories at Himera and Salamis (7.166) took place on one and the same day. In an alternative presentation, probably based on Timaius, the victory at Himera and the heroic defeat at Thermopylae happened on the very same day (Diodorus 11.24.1). Ephorus reinterpreted the scenario of the synchronous threat to Hellenic freedom in the east and the west as a coordinated attack: Carthage and the Persians had joined forces against Hellas (Ephorus FGrH 70F 186 = Schol. Pind. 1.146b). Though Aristotle denied a connection between the two events in the sense of a common *telos* (*Poetics* 23 p. 1459a), Ephorus' interpretation of history was to prove efficacious (Bichler 2000: pp. 318–333; cf. generally Marincola 2007; Parmeggiani 2014).

Reality, however, looked different (cf. generally Cawkwell 2005). The Persian Empire under Xerxes remained largely stable, in spite of the loss of power in the Aegean and the coastal regions of Asia Minor as far as the Eurymedon (where Cimon was victorious at sea again around 465 BCE). Under his successor Artaxerxes I (465–424 BCE), the Athenian attempt at profiting from a rebellion in Egypt was foiled. After Cimon's last successful military operations at Salamis in Cyprus in 449/8 BCE, the relationship between the Delian League and the Persian king changed. Although the

existence of a formal peace treaty (Peace of Callias) is a subject of controversy (but cf. Herodotus 7.151), the “enemy” seems pacified. In Attic art and literature, a distinct move toward belittling the former opponent is noticeable in the portrayal of the Persians (Miller 1997). As a consequence of the wars for hegemony that Athens waged, this opponent, however, gained political scope. It became a desirable objective to win the Great King’s, respectively his satraps’, favor.

In Herodotus’ *Histories* these changes are apparent only in numerous allusions and in the subtext. The great narrative of the Persian Wars concludes with the consequences of the victories at Plataea and Mycale, which already portend the change of the Athenians into future despots. The portrayal of the Persian Empire and its rulers after 480/79 BCE was to a great extent determined by the *Persica*, above all by Ctesias and Dinon. These histories, dating from the fourth century BCE, were lost in the original but potent in impact. In them, the court of the Great King is described as a center of power at which decisions frequently depend rather on the entourage than on the sovereign himself (Stevenson 1997; Lenfant 2009; Madreiter 2012; Waters 2020). Xerxes’ exit from the historical stage, as recounted by Herodotus, is already resonant of this. There is one more aspect: wherever the historiography of the subsequent period centers on the inner-Greek wars for hegemony and the relations with the Persian Empire pertaining to them, it is again the satraps and generals that appear as the leading figures. The kings no longer determine the events on the historical stage in the same way as the four “great” ones did in Herodotus’ rendering: Cyrus, Cambyses, Darius, and Xerxes. Over 600 years later, a Roman of average education was still supposed to know their names and deeds (Lucius Ampelius, *liber memorialis* c. 13). After centuries, cities in Asia Minor were still in a position to refer to Cyrus and Darius in order to claim privileges from the Roman Emperor (Tacitus, *Annals* 3.62–63) (cf. generally Spawforth 1994; Lenfant 2011).

Stereotype in the Portrayal of the Great King

The individual features in the perception of the rulers of the subsequent period disappeared slowly and gave way to a more standardized, but at the same time extremely ambivalent, portrayal of the Great King. This development toward a stereotypical representation remarkably enough coincided with a drastic decrease in Old Persian royal inscriptions (Rollinger 2014). Thus, Ctesias delineated Artaxerxes I (465–424 BCE) as a ruler whose plenitude of power is undermined by his incapacity to assert himself against the intrigues at court and the influence of powerful women within the royal family. In addition, there is the contrasting character of the noble Megabyzos which throws such

weaknesses into even sharper relief. In the end, the king turned into a literary figure who is able to show examples of both commendable and repulsive conduct. For instance, in a rage he is said to have given orders to decapitate Megabyzos because he had beaten him to it on a lion hunt (Ctesias F 14[43]; Waters 2020). Ammianus Marcellinus, meanwhile, was able to refer to the story according to which this ruler used to mitigate harsh penalties and contrasted this attitude favorably with Emperor Valentinian's lack of self-control (30.8.5; cf. Plutarch, *Apophthegmata*, *Artaxerxes* 3 p.173b). Xenophon, in turn, criticized that from Artaxerxes I onward overindulgence in wine became common among the Persians (*Cyropaedia* 8.8.12).

The both contradictory and stereotypical characterization of the Great King becomes even more apparent in the case of Artaxerxes II. The figure of Darius II (423–404 BCE), meanwhile, remains bloodless, although it is under his government that the ultimately decisive influence of Persian policy on the conflict-ridden development within the set of Greek states grew in importance. But from a Greek perspective this policy was primarily embodied by the relevant satraps. The three treaties between the king and Sparta, recorded by Thucydides, in whose drafting Tissaphernes acted as an intermediary, are convincing proof of this (8.18; 37; 58). In the person of Artaxerxes II (405–359 BCE), the Great King himself steps into the focus of Greek attention more distinctly. A series of factors was responsible for this. The failed attempt of his brother Cyrus to oust the disliked successor to the throne with the help of Greek mercenaries (Battle of Cunaxa 401 BCE) had caused a great sensation. Ctesias' *Persica* as well as Xenophon's *Anabasis* made this fratricidal war and its implications widely known. Additionally, there were the ups and downs of Greek politics. Athens' thalassocracy had collapsed at the end of the Peloponnesian War (404 BCE). Artaxerxes II had to accept that Egypt broke with the empire (402/1 BCE) but was able to stabilize his reign in Asia Minor and the Levant and to restrain Sparta's still growing power. In the famous King's Peace (387/6 BCE), Artaxerxes II even became a guarantor for the endeavor to pacify the inner-Greek struggles for power. Finally, the king also skillfully managed to contain some disloyal satraps' striving for power in Asia Minor and the Levant (cf. generally on the testimonies for the reign of Artaxerxes I and Darius II Kuhrt 2007: pp. 310–346).

Greek literary perception of the Persian Empire and its representatives in this era is marked by ambivalences. There was almost unanimous agreement on Tissaphernes and Pharnabazos, the two satraps most relevant for the policy of the Hellenic cities. The former was considered a prototype of a treacherous and cruel enemy of the Hellenes because he had pursued a seesaw policy in order to preserve the political equilibrium between Athens and Sparta during the last stage of the Peloponnesian War (Plutarch, *Alcibiades* 24). As an adversary of the insurgent pretender Cyrus, he was on the opposite side to the

Greek mercenary army on the battlefield of Cunaxa. The information that after Cyrus' death he had decoyed its commander into a deadly trap sealed the harsh judgment of posterity on him, an assessment not only Xenophon's account in his *Anabasis* was responsible for. His juxtaposition of the perjured Tissaphernes, who is always out for his own interests, with the noble Pharnabazos, who committed himself to both his family tradition and the king, also accentuates the judgment (cf. *Hellenica* 3.4.5–6 together with 4.1.29–40; Tuplin 1993, 2004). Rivalry between the satraps was a hallmark of Artaxerxes' later period of government, too. Thus a vita by Cornelius Nepos has survived, in essence presumably going back to Dinon, whose protagonist is – a unique case – a satrap, the Carian Datames. He represents the type of honest and capable general who in the end falls victim to his rival and false friend Mithridates (on Dinon as Nepos' preferred source concerning Persica cf. *Konon* 5.4).

As a consequence of Xenophon's influence, the distribution of sympathies in the characterization of the rival claimants to the throne after the death of Darius II assumed concrete contours. In his obituary of Cyrus, who had been killed at Cunaxa, he delineated the first of his idealistic portraits of exemplary leadership (*Anabasis* 1.9). With his characterization of the Great King, Ctesias, who prided himself on his status at the court of Artaxerxes II, he contributed his might to the image that was passed on to posterity: compared with his domineering mother, who takes terrible revenge for the death of her favorite, Cyrus, Artaxerxes II appears rather weak (F 16[66–67]). But this ought not to belie the factual power of the Great King. It might have been Ctesias' successor Dinon who added a major proportion of the information about the Great King's later reign which, for instance, is reflected in Plutarch's ambivalent biography of the king (Binder 2008; Lenfant 2009). The monarch's favor varied mercilessly according to what was politically expedient (cf. the different treatment of Antalcidas, depending on Sparta's strength or weakness (*Artaxerxes* 22)). A similar disparity can be found in the judgment about the strength and weakness of the king himself. As it happened, Isocrates, in a call for joint action on the side of the supreme Hellenic powers against Artaxerxes II, had given a contemptuous assessment of the king's supposed military strength (esp. cf. *Panegyrikos* 138). But when he wanted to spur on Philip II to open an offensive war against Artaxerxes III, he revalued his predecessor's military capacity considerably in comparison to the current situation (*Philippos* 99). Likewise, the evaluation of Artaxerxes' II character remains ambivalent. Hence Imperial Roman literature, according to requirements, still provides examples showing both the pitilessness and cruelty of this king, who was, admittedly, outshone by his mother in this respect (cf. Plutarch, *Artaxerxes* 16; 19), and his generosity and exemplary statesman-like conduct (Plutarch, *Apophthegmata* p. 173f–174a; cf. Aelian, *Varia Historia* 1.32–33).

Plutarch's conclusive assessment still deems Artaxerxes II an indulgent and popular ruler, in contrast to his son and successor, who surpassed all his predecessors in terms of cruelty and bloodlust (*Artaxerxes* 30). Artaxerxes' II reputation might have been instrumental in choosing the name Artaxerxes – without any differentiation – for a Persian king in the historical romance *Callirhoe* by Chariton of Aphrodisias; the figure is noble, though hardly able to master his passions. Such novelistic features can also be attributed to the Persian king in the Judaeo-Hellenistic story of Esther. Josephus identifies him with Artaxerxes I (*Antiquitates* 11.6.1). Another matter is the merging of Artaxerxes I and Artaxerxes II in the salvation-historical traditions on Nehemia and Ezra.

The historical judgment passed on Artaxerxes III (359–338 BCE), however, was clear. He was regarded as an exceedingly cruel ruler who raged against his own family (Valerius Maximus 9 ext.7; Justin 10.3.1). The creation of this negative image in literature must probably be seen against the backdrop of his recapturing of Egypt. The propagandistic alignment of the king with the outrageous conqueror Cambyses obviously proved effective (Aelian, *Historia animalium* 10.28; *Varia historia* 6.8) (Henkelman 2011b: pp. 129–134; cf. generally on the testimonies for the reign of Artaxerxes II and Artaxerxes III Kuhrt 2007: pp. 347–417; Vittmann 2011; Wasmuth 2017).

The palace intrigues and the conflicts for succession, in which the eunuch Bagoas pulled the strings as chiliarch, also cast unfavorable light on the leadership of the Persian Empire (Diodorus 16.50.7–8; 17.5.3). In addition, there was the propaganda which accompanied the war plans of Philip II of Macedon and his son's great campaign, opened in the spring of 334 BCE. The unexpected development of Alexander's campaign into a conquering expedition that led him to the boundaries of the Achaemenid Empire laid the basis for his idealization in the contemporary as well as the later historical literature. This had major implications for the assessment of the condition that the Persian Empire was in and the appreciation of Darius III's personality (Briant 2003, 2010).

Furthermore, there is the distorted image of Darius III (336–330 BCE), who was seen as a foil to Alexander. The notion of a hesitant and cowardly king who took premature flight at Issos and Gaugamela primarily goes back to Callisthenes. It found its expression in the works of those authors who, in its underlying tendency, delineated an idealized portrait of Alexander: Plutarch and Arrian. These very authors level only restrained criticism at Alexander's claim to adopt the legacy of the Achaemenid Empire also in the representation of his sovereignty. Another tradition, presumably above all based on Cleitarchus, painted a rather grim picture of Alexander's progressive development into an "oriental" despot. It is exactly these authors – Diodorus, Trogus/Justin and most notably Curtius – who give a

far more favorable picture of Darius and his bearing in the decisive battle at Gaugamela. The grandiose speech which Curtius puts into the king's mouth at the outset of the battle is a tribute to a nobleman who is looking back upon the proud history of an empire that has existed for 230 years and who is facing the change of destiny bravely (Curtius 4.14.8–26). The possibilities of using the clichés about the Great King just as circumstances required were diverse. But in whichever way the portraits of the kings, from Cyrus to Darius III, were delineated, the fascination that emanated from the sheer scope of their reign and the administrative organization behind it was strong (Briant 2010; Müller 2014).

The Ambivalences in the Portrayal of the Military Powers and the Economic Resources

The military power and the wealth of its kings shaped the ancient image of the Persian Empire across time (Raaflaub 2011; Tuplin 2011). Its resources seemed inexhaustible, yet it was still possible to inflict a painful military defeat on King Xerxes' forces at sea and on land. The experience of this victory soon had the effect that the dimension of the threat was significantly augmented in a poetic manner. Aeschylus opened his *Persians* with an impressive depiction of Xerxes' troops, which have been recruited from all known regions of the empire (1–92), and, following Homer's example, gave the number of ships in Xerxes' fleet as 1207 (*Persae* 341–343). From Herodotus onward, the listing of the enormous size of the Persian army, organized into ethnicities and branches of service, became a permanent feature. It left an imprint on the depiction of battles not only in the great works of historiography from Xenophon to the Alexander historians. The *vita* of Datames by Nepos, too, provides an impressive catalog of army groups in the service of the Great King Artaxerxes II. In the field, Datames prevails against an army 20 times the size of his own forces. There is a tradition to this.

When Herodotus has Darius campaigning against the Scythians, raising 700 000 foot soldiers and 600 ships (4.87), or estimates the total armed forces which attacked Hellas under Xerxes at 5 283 200 men (7.184–187), these stunning figures are supposed to illustrate the dimensions of the Persian Empire and its resources. At the same time they pay homage to the fighting capacity of those who triumph over such superior numbers. Xenophon, who took part in the Battle of Cunaxa in 401 BCE, puts the potential troop strength of the Great King (Artaxerxes II) at 1 200 000 men; about 900 000 had been on the battlefield, along with 6000 cavalry and 150 chariots (*Anabasis* 1.7.12). On his own side, led by Prince Cyrus, 10 400 Greek hoplites fought alongside 100 000 men and 600 cavalry (*Anabasis* 1.8.6;

24). For the decisive battle at Gaugamela in 330 BCE, Arrian attributes 1 000 000 foot soldiers and 40 000 cavalry to the Great King, who were countered by Alexander's only 40 000 infantry and 7000 cavalry (*Anabasis* 3.8.6; 12.5). Plutarch, presumably based on Callisthenes, also numbers Darius' force at 1 000 000 troops (*Alexander* 31). The authors who follow the so-called Vulgate diminish the size of Darius' army: Diodorus puts it at 800 000 foot soldiers but 200 000 cavalry (12.53.3); Trogus/Justin estimate it at 500 000 infantry and 100 000 cavalry (11.12.5); and finally, according to Curtius, it numbered only 200 000 infantry and 45 000 cavalry (4.12.13). This numbers game can even assume grotesque proportions: Ctesias reports that Leonidas' men slew a total of 10 000 + 20 000 + 50 000 opponents at Thermopylae during the first three days of the battle. But all this did not avert their bitter fate. He reduced the total size of Xerxes' forces to 800 000 infantry and 1000 ships (F 13[27]) and left Mardonios only 120 000 soldiers (F 13[27–28] Lenfant 2004). The huge army over which Datames' opponent Autophradates allegedly had command has already been mentioned (Nepos, Datames c.8).

Whereas such figures hold little factual validity, the catalogues of the combatants can illustrate the ethnic diversity and the branches of service under the command of the Great King, respectively their generals. As a rule, however, most of the units and formations initially listed do not play a role in the concrete description of the battles. This applies to the depiction of battles from Herodotus' account of the Persian Wars onward to the presentations of Alexander's battles, and makes the reconstruction of the actual events more difficult, quite apart from the problem of incorrect figures.

The huge numbers that illustrate the military power of the Persians hint at another cliché: the enormous riches which the Great King was reputed to possess. (On the complex economic structures in the Persian Empire, with marked regional differences, cf. Briant 2002a: pp. 357–471; Bedford 2007; Ruffing 2011.)

In Herodotus' work, this wealth is the result of Darius' tax measures and it culminates in the fairytale-like image of the king, who hoards entire vessels filled with molten precious metal at his residence (3.96.2) and at whose palace even the women have coffers of gold (3.130.4–5). Such enormous wealth is not only able to maintain large armies but also to be effective as a political instrument. This was to become a lesson during the period of the Peloponnesian War. Herodotus refers to this in his judgment on the Persian Wars: Mardonios could have broken up the alliance of the Greek states and achieved his aim of subduing them by offering them gifts of money. But he was blinded and did not follow the advice (9.2–3). The mistake cost him dearly. The illusory effect of wealth is one of the regular motifs in Herodotus' narratives. The Persian kings' trust in the ostensible superiority of their economic and military resources amounted to nothing. So the failure of their presumptuous schemes

for conquest becomes a recurring event. But Herodotus only occasionally borrows the cliché of the cowardly subjects who are only prepared to fight under constraint. As a rule he appreciates the bravery and courage of the Persian troops and officers. His image of their initially simple way of life and the strict morals, which had made the Persians strong, stands next to the image of wealth and luxury in an ambience of despotic power (Bichler 2010).

The Peloponnesian War and the subsequent wars for hegemony gave the Persian kings and satraps the opportunity to intervene, either by means of funding or by direct military action, in order to prevent any Greek power from establishing a dominant position. At this point there is an increasing tendency in Greek literature to design clichéd tableaux of the royal court as a seat of power filled with luxury and vice, intrigues and cruelty, the center of a vast but not at all invulnerable empire. The *Persica* by Ctesias, which has not survived, and his successors developed the prototypical image of a decadent “orient” fully. Components of this image could easily be applied as a means of political rhetoric (Madreiter 2012). Thus Isocrates was able to underpin his soliciting support for a campaign against the Persians (intended to pacify inner-Greek struggles) with a hint at enticing treasures (esp. *Panegyricos* 187; *Philippos* 130) and the notorious weakness of a despotic regime: cowardice and subservience of the elites to the despot, together with the intrigues and the disloyalty of the satraps, all this would facilitate an easy victory (*Panegyricos* 150). The addresses of such propaganda had changed altogether, though. It was no longer directed at the old hegemonic powers in Hellas but at Philip II of Macedon, who had been able to expand his rule over almost all of Greece. In fact, Philip, as hegemon of the League of Corinth, did proclaim a revenge campaign against the Achaemenid Empire (337 BCE) and made initial preparations for it in 336 BCE. It is uncertain whether or not his war objectives reached beyond the “liberation” of the Greek cities on the west coast of Asia Minor. At any rate, Alexander for the time being continued his father’s undertaking after he had consolidated his reign rapidly. Yet this campaign soon was to take on a dynamic of its own. The fact that Alexander took excessive risks in the process and more than once recklessly jeopardized his life is well known. But to consider the venture an easy success could hardly be further from the truth. Alexander’s conquering expedition succeeded only because – apart from his good fortune in battle – he was able to rely on the existing infrastructure and the economic resources of the Achaemenid Empire, including its potential for recruitment, and to integrate local administrative elites into the new system of government (Briant 2010). The widespread notions of the “hero with feet of clay” whose power of resistance was weakened by luxury and decadence lack plausibility. It is evident, however, that the financial resources of the Great King were welcome loot. But historical tradition is quite cliché-ridden here, too. Herodotus had already recounted how after the decisive Battle of Plataea (479 BCE) great

spoils were taken. The luxury found in the tent of the Persian general Mardonios became legendary (9.80–83). Great importance is attached to the capture of the royal baggage train and the war chest at Issos in Alexander history. Even more emphasis is placed on Alexander's interest in the treasuries in Susa and Persepolis. Two details may illustrate the reputation which after centuries continued to stick to the fabulous former wealth of the royal cities. Arrian reports that Alexander had still come upon financial resources in King Cyrus' treasuries (3.18.10). And the Christian universal history by Orosius records the memory that Alexander captured Persepolis, a very famous city that held treasures from all over the world (3.17.5).

It was easy to use this accentuated depiction of the Persian kings' great wealth and their luxurious life in political propaganda as an indication of an effeminate lifestyle and a resulting military weakness. Xenophon reacted to this in his *Cyropaedia* by having his ideal ruler – timely, yet in vain – warn against the danger of prospective effeminacy. It loomed in the form of luxurious living, as led by the Medes, and was contrasted with the strict Persian upbringing (8.8.15). But experience showed time and again that things were more complex. Thus the much-vaunted success in the Persian Wars could not hide the fact that the Achaemenids continued to have control over large parts of the then known oikoumene. That is why Herodotus merged two diverging images in order to explain the power of the Persian kings and the limits of this power. The strength of the Persians, which made them masters of a huge empire, is grounded in their strict morals and simple way of life. At the same time, the elite of this empire are threatened in their integrity by their wealth and luxurious lifestyle. Blinded by their thirst for power, it is predominantly the rulers who violate the old ways all too easily. Nevertheless, despite all that luxury, the fighting capacity of their armies and notably of the Persians themselves should not be underrated. The bravery of the elite, among them the 10 000 immortals, was apparent in the Battle of Plataea – irrespective of their ostentatious luxury (cf. 7.40f.; 83; 9.71.1; 80–83) (Bichler 2010).

The reputation of their bravery was even able to survive beyond the end of the Achaemenid Empire – against all deprecating rhetoric. According to Pausanias, the warlike Galatians, who had invaded Greece around 279 BCE, were said to have followed the example of the 10 000 immortals (10.19.11). The fighting capacity of the Persian slingers and archers was still respected in the Wars of the Diadochi (Diodorus 9.21.3). And the office of chiliarch was of high repute under Alexander and the Diadochi (Diodorus 18.48.4–5). Hence the image of the Persian Empire in classical tradition remained ambivalent. The decadence of the Orient stood in contrast to the admiring notion of an alien world with immense potential. This dichotomy is a legacy of antiquity which can be traced right up to the present day (Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1987; Wieshöfer 1996: pp. 79–88; Briant 2002b).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am grateful to Franz Pramhaas for translating a German version of this text into English.

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CHAPTER 98

“Perserie”

Margaret Miller and Stavros A. Paspalas

Introduction

The expansion of the Persian Empire to the shores of the Mediterranean Sea began a new era of east–west exchange. All of the eastern Mediterranean now lay under one imperial power whose agents and military forces spread throughout the region, conditions that expedited the emergence of a shared cultural symbology. Throughout the empire there is evidence for local receptivity to Persian ideas and local adoption of Persian imperial imagery.

Receptivity to Persian culture also occurred outside the Empire. In the following pages the phenomenon of *perserie* (receptivity to Achaemenid Persian culture) will be examined in two regions of Greece, Attica, and Macedonia, that lay for only a brief period within the Persian realm. The fact of complex and sometimes bellicose relations complicated the patterns of receptivity; the existence of *perserie* despite political tensions testifies to the semantic power of the model. Processes such as trade, booty, and diplomatic gift-exchange introduced Persian goods to each region (e.g. the Persian glass stamp seal found in Athens [Figure 98.1]). Understanding of Persian social practice could derive from observation of visiting Persians, travel within the Persian Empire for diplomatic, economic, or military reasons, or through third-party informants like the foreign residents in Athens (Bäbler 1998). Literary sources are rarely interested in such matters, which are best documented through material and iconographic evidence; it is therefore especially difficult to assess the extent to which importation of foreign goods affected lifestyle.



Figure 98.1 Berlin, FG 189: Persian light green glass seal said to have been found in Athens in the nineteenth century. Source: BPK Bildagentur, reproduced by permission (Photograph Isolde Ludiert).

In previous centuries Near Eastern and Anatolian imports had served as vehicles for social status-enhancing display among the Greek elite and inspired local imitations. Attributes of specifically Persian type in the sixth through fourth centuries BCE potentially evoked a different response; the fact that the new models derived from an empire of unparalleled wealth and power potentially gave rise to a new semantics of power also west of the Aegean.

Perserie in Athens (M.C. Miller)

Athens exhibits a wide range of cultural responses to the Persian Empire, from the level of the individual to the state. From early on her elite, always on the lookout for new ways to advertise their superiority, adopted certain Persian items and practices as benchmarks of social standing; the common process of social devolution of status goods saw the local replication of some items. At the state level, in the fifth century BCE, Athens as the head of its own empire selectively adapted forms of Persian imperial expression (Miller 1997).

While the greatest volume of evidence for Persians and Persian goods in Greece relates to the Persian War period (490–478 BCE), it is clear that awareness of and taste for Persian goods and fashions was already developing from the time of the Persian conquest of the Lydian Empire. In some senses Persians simply supplanted the Lydian court as the benchmark of elite elegance. Persian-style riches were evidently valued by Archaic Greek aristocrats

for their connotations of elite standing; even after the repulse of Xerxes’ invasion, the attraction of the Persian model continued through the fifth and the fourth centuries, at odds with official hostility.

Drinking vessels and modes of drinking provide a useful lens through which to view levels and phases of reception to Persian culture (Miller 1993). Attic vase painting from the later sixth century shows the occasional drinker using a Persian-style metal lobed bowl (Tsingarida 2009), that closely resembles the silver lobed bowls from Persian-period Lydian tombs (Özgen and Öztürk 1996: cat. no. 38–40). Imported metalware vessels, probably a result of gift-exchange, are attested in Athens through ceramic imitations; in the Agora excavations, the earliest attested ceramic “Achaemenid bowls” with characteristic profile and horizontal flutes, are stratigraphically dated from c. 510 BCE, proving that Persian metalware drinking bowls were known, coveted, and imitated well before the Persian invasions (Figure 98.2a).



Figure 98.2 (a) Athens, Agora P9274: Attic black gloss ceramic imitation of a Persian deep bowl, c. 500–480 (Neg. no. 7–181). Source: Reproduced by permission of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Agora Excavations. (b) Athens, Agora P16828: Attic calyx cup, black gloss ceramic imitation of a Persian deep bowl, c. 370. Source: Reproduced by permission of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Agora Excavations.

Attic imagery suggests that in the sixth and early fifth century BCE, Greeks held the drinking bowl in the palm of the hand (Tsingarida 2009), in contrast to the refined Persian manner, balanced on extended fingertips (cf. Figure 43.3; see Chapter 21 Asia Minor). Such a drinking mode was alien in Greece; a number of Attic potters produced adaptations of Persian-style pots with a resting surface and handles, more suited to Greek usage. A more long-term response to Persian decorative esthetic can be traced through the application of grooves (emulating the appearance of eastern lobed vessels) and horizontal flutes to Greek vessel forms, both ceramic and metal.

Precise imitation of Persian metalware bowls in Attic ceramic went in and out of fashion. A late example, the “calyx cup,” a small deep vessel with petal-grooving reminiscent of the Persian deep lobed bowl, emerged in ceramic from c. 370 BCE (Figure 98.2b). The scene of a near contemporary Attic krater with a Greek symposiast balancing a bowl on fingertips suggests that adoption of the Persian drinking mode had finally arrived (Besios 2010, p. 185; here Figure 98.3). An analogous, if not parallel, pattern of receptivity is seen in Persian animal-protome vessels and rhyta (Ebbinghaus 2008; Ebbinghaus 2018, pp.135–187).

The elite of later fifth-century BCE Athens continued to look to Persia for symbols of wealthy lifestyle as part of competitive display, even in the face of an increasingly democratic cultural context and an official rhetoric of superiority



Figure 98.3 Attic RF bell krater from Pydna, Makriyalos 44, c. 350, Symposiast holds drinking bowl on fingertips. Source: Reproduced by permission of Matthaios Besios (Besios 2010:p. 185).

over Persians. About 435 BCE Kallias, the richest man in Athens, boasted a eunuch doorkeeper (Plato, *Protagoras* 314C). A decade earlier the Athenian diplomat Pylilampes acquired peacocks (Antiphon fr. 57–59 Blass). Alkibiades maintained a Persian tent at Olympia when in 416 BCE he notoriously fielded multiple chariot teams (Plutarch, *Alkibiades* 12.1; Athenaios 12.534d).

A parallel phenomenon can be tracked also in dress. Iranian sleeved garments are first attested in Athens in the Persian War period; late fifth-century BCE votive inscriptions listing dedications of personal objects by women confirm the use of a “sleeved chiton” and that the *kandys* was a precious Athenian women’s garment (Miller 1997: pp. 156–170). In fact, sleeved garments are more attested for Athenian women than men (although some male musicians don an elaborate sleeved chiton as festive garb). A kind of woman’s soft closed shoe with the suggestive name of *persike* enjoyed a vogue in Athens; a tombstone for a Thracian *persikopoios*, or *persike*-maker, indicates that at least one manufacturer in Athens was an immigrant (Bäbler 1998: No. 116). Gendered, too, is the appropriation from the east of the status symbolism of luxury attendants such as parasol-bearers and fan-bearers for elite women (Miller 1997: pp. 192–210). One major source of information transfer was Persian seals, which comprise the largest proportion of extant Iranian imports to Greece (Figure 98.1) and may explain some interesting “quotations” of Achaemenid imagery by Athenian artifacts (Miller 1997: fig. 18; imports updated Miller 2002: pp. 302–303). Persian imperial imagery provided a model for presentations of mythological kings in Attic art (Miller 1988).

At the public level, the Athenian state collectively incorporated a range of imperial Persian symbols of power, most readily visible in the “Odeion of Perikles” and the new procession rhetoric of the major state festivals. The “Odeion” stood on the south slope of the Acropolis to the east of the Theater of Dionysos and was huge, at 62×65 m the largest roofed building in the Greek world (Figure 98.4; model: Miller 1997: fig. 147; restored plan: Shear 2016: fig. 67). It was an unconventional structure for Greece: it reportedly had innumerable columns and many angles. The vestigial remains confirm the many columns, arranged in rows. The columns made it seem Persian to a Greek viewer, to whom the pyramidal roof they supported made it look like a Persian tent, reputedly the tent of Xerxes (Vitruvius 5.9.1, Plutarch, *Perikles* 13.9–11, Pausanias 1.20.4). In producing the “Odeion,” the Athenians deliberately adapted a building type developed in Iran to convey a specific message of imperial majesty, and in giving it a pyramidal roof, they modified it slightly, to make it buildable by Greek construction methods. The “Odeion’s” elevated position on a 9 m high platform enhanced its resemblance to the hypostyle halls of Persian palatial architecture. Resonating against its Persian prototypes, the “Odeion” was a statement of imperial pride (Miller 1997: pp. 218–242; Shear 2016: pp. 197–228).



Figure 98.4 Acropolis Study Centre: Odeion of Perikles/Model of south slope Acropolis, made in 1985 under direction of Manolis Korres. Source: (Photo Hans R. Goette), reproduced by permission of Hans R. Goette.

Processions had always played an important part of Greek ritual practice, but in Athens from the mid-fifth century, festival processions especially came to broadcast her imperial relations. Once a year for Festival of Dionysos, Athenian “colonies” and the Greek peoples euphemistically called “the allies of the Athenians,” were required to take part in the procession, bringing votive phalloi with choruses, sacrifices, and their imperial tribute (Isokrates 8.82), for display in the Theater of Dionysos. The route wound from the Agora around the Acropolis along the Street of the Tripods, past the towering facade of the “Odeion,” to the Theater. The Dionysia procession at once embraced the allies within the Athenian body politic and placed them on a subordinate level, on an equal footing with the colonies of the metropolis. Whatever the precise relationship between Persepolis’ Apadana procession reliefs and the realities of Persian court ritual, the clear visual articulation of social relations set a model that was effectively emulated by imperial Athens.

An important Athenian festival procession was the quadrennial Greater Panathenaia whose traditional ritual purpose was to deliver a newly-woven peplos to the ancient statue of the goddess Athena on the Acropolis. Every member of the body politic was symbolically represented in the procession. In the mid-fifth century BCE, the allies were also required to take part, taking a cow and panoply to dedicate to Athena. The *kanephoroi* – the Athenian girls who carried sacrificial baskets at the head of processions – were given an added distinction: the daughters of the metics (the resident aliens in Athens) were required to act as parasol-bearers for them at the Panathenaia (Aristophanes, *Birds* 1549–1551; Aelian, *Varia Historia* 6.1). Later authors viewed the

introduction of parasol-bearing at the Panathenaia as characteristic of Athenian arrogance. It was part of a carefully orchestrated public display of the imperial power vested in the people of Athens, using the imagery of the Persian east but reworked in Greek terms.

Perserie in Athens is not to be explicitly associated with Persian War victory, though the fact of victory enhanced the range and the emotional appeal of the phenomenon. In the public forum as in private life, the citizens of Athens looked to the Persian Empire to provide models for the effective presentation of rank and power.

Perserie in Macedonia (S.A. Paspalas)

The evidence on which a study of Macedonian receptivity to aspects of Achaemenid material culture and practices, throughout a period in which their relationship underwent important changes, can be founded is not extensive. The written sources concentrate on two periods: (i) the late sixth and early fifth centuries BCE; (ii) the reigns of Philip II and Alexander III. In both these periods it is certain that Achaemenid subjects were present in Macedonia and that at least elite Macedonians had the opportunity to encounter them and learn something of their ways (Herodotos 5.17–21, 7.185, 8.34, 9.31; Diodoros 16.52.3; Athenaios 6.256c–e; Curtius Rufus 3.7.11, 6.4.25).

The relevant material is, however, primarily restricted to the later period and its aftermath, though it has been suggested that Alexander I (r. 498–454) is shown with an *akinakes* on some of his coinage (Heinrichs and Müller 2008: pp. 292–295). While artifacts with an ultimately eastern pedigree have been excavated in contexts dated to the second half of the sixth century in Macedonia (primarily silver and bronze lobed phialai sometimes accompanied by metal strainers and basins like eastern drinking sets), we lack conclusive proof that the adoption of such *realia* (and possibly practices) were specifically Achaemenid-related. Lines of communication between the western coast of Anatolia and the northwestern Aegean had been in operation long before Cyrus’ conquest of Lydia, so even as we recognize the presence of Achaemenids in Macedonia from Megabazos’ European campaign (Herodotos 5.17) onwards, we must equally temper the temptation to identify every find of this period with an eastern origin (proximate or approximate) as a direct reference to the Achaemenid overlords. With the later development of the “International Court Style” (Melikian-Chirvani 1993) we are on firmer ground.

In the mid-fourth century, during the reign of Philip II, definite Achaemenid traces appear in the material record in the form of the silver calyx cup (Figure 98.5). Details of the design of these cups indicate that they owed something to vessels from the Achaemenid sphere. Given the importance of



Figure 98.5 Silver calyx cup, c. 350–325, from Sevaste, Peiria. Source: Reproduced by permission of Matthaïos Besios (Besios 2010:p. 289).

the presentation of such precious vessels from the Great King downwards in the Empire (for Xerxes' gift-giving in the northern Aegean: Herodotos 7.116) and the fact that the written sources refer to Philip acting similarly (Demosthenes 19.139–140; Diodoros 16.3.3), it is likely that the early Macedonian calyx cups could carry specifically Achaemenid associations, especially among the elite who may have had access to easterners, and that the Macedonians who used them may well have aimed to emulate practices associated with the great empire. Recent studies have stressed both the likelihood of local manufacture as well as links with metalworking traditions of western Anatolia (Zimi 2011: pp. 72–73).

Most of the Achaemenid or achaemenidizing material, primarily from elite funerary contexts (where, though, they comprise a minority of the finds), dates to the decades immediately following Alexander's successes in Asia when Macedonia benefitted from incoming eastern wealth (Touratsoglou 2010: pp. 76–80, 104–106, 220–222, 228–229), much of which was transformed into "Greek" forms. A late fourth-century tomb painting from Dion (Brecoulaki 2006: pp. 248–249, pl. 88, 3), now largely lost, pictured a textile closely comparable to representations of textiles from the Achaemenid sphere (Figure 98.6). Those who commissioned it must have believed that it could successfully convey a positive message. This, arguably, is also the case with the frit casings for the feet of a bier found in a cist grave at Pella of the late fourth or early third century. They belong to a category well known from widely-dispersed representations of the enthroned Great King, and they also appear on the throne of

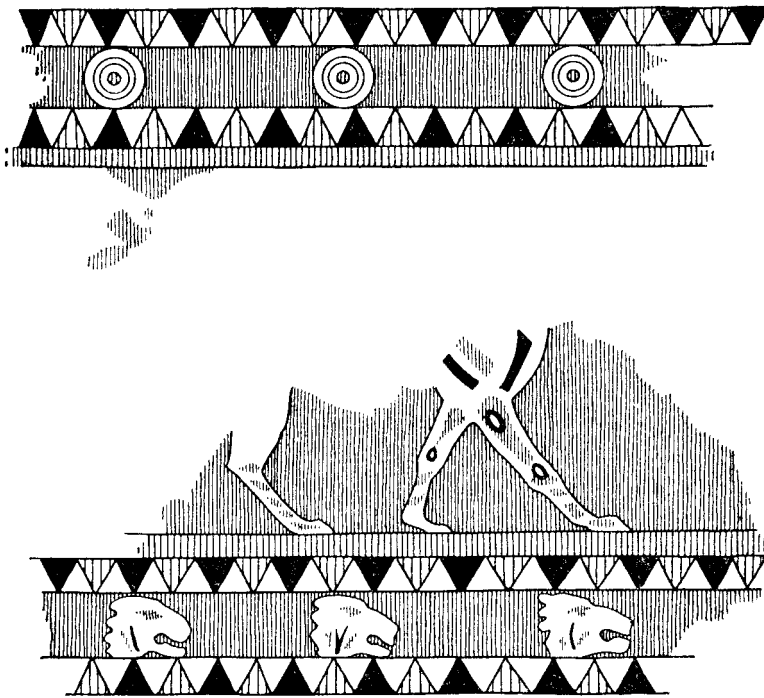


Figure 98.6 Dion tomb painting, Achaemenid textile, late fourth century BCE. Source: Drawing (Boardman, J. [1970], *Travelling Rugs*, *Antiquity* 44, p. 143 Fig. 1), reproduced by permission of John Boardman.

a female figure on an “Anatolo-Persian” type gold ring found in a grave at Pydna (Besios 2010: p. 184). The Achaemenid associations of these casings and the painted textile could well have been known to the interred and those who buried them, and given the date of their use and deposition may have entailed an element of conscious appropriation of Achaemenid riches.

Not all objects that reached Macedonia from former Achaemenid territories need to have belonged to the International Court Style. A “Neo-Babylonian” conoid seal (Besios 2010: p. 195) was also excavated in a female’s grave of the end of the fourth century at Pydna, while it is possible that a gold hair ornament of a type best known from representations of female figures on Greco-Persian gems found in a grave of the first half of the third century at Kassandrea may have been worn by a woman who originated in the east (Grammenos 2007: p. 211 no.7). A similar conduit has been suggested to explain the presence of a Tibetan dZi bead in a Hellenistic context at Leibethra (Ignatiadou 2009: pp. 598–599).

A lobed and horizontally-ribbed clear-glass beaker from a burial dated to the end of the fourth century at Derveni has antecedents in the International Court Style. Its relevance, though, is wider as it and earlier, third quarter of

the fourth century, rings, gaming pieces, inlays, and seals may well testify to the local manufacture of clear-glass objects whose technological knowledge was probably transmitted from one of the western Achaemenid satrapies (Ignatiadou 2010: pp. 423–425).

Silver calyx cups continued to be made into the latter part of the fourth century and beyond, and they were imitated locally in other materials but mainly in clay (Zimi 2011: p. 72), though it is a matter of debate if the referent was the toreutic of the Macedonian elite or of the now defeated Persians. The form, however, had been domesticated. The same, it has been suggested, may hold for the Macedonian “jug of Achaemenid type” of the second half of the fourth century, which may reformulate the Achaemenid pitcher or flask by the addition of a handle and so render the eastern form usable in local contexts (Zimi 2011: p. 38). This reformulation and domestication of Achaemenid types is also evident in the marked Macedonian adoption of the lion-griffin following Alexander’s conquest, where its leonine hind legs replace their avian counterparts of the Achaemenid model. More importantly, the Macedonians employed the hybrid in funerary contexts, a sphere in which it is only known once in the Achaemenid Empire (Paphlagonia). The Macedonian lion-griffin may also have had wider apotropaic associations, and could be domesticated to the extent that the hybrid could grace female jewellery (Paspalas 2008; Descamps-Lequime 2011: p. 384 no. 241/1–2, p. 466 no. 293).

The domestication of other objects, particularly the animal-headed rhyton, associated with the Achaemenid sphere is primarily documented by tomb paintings. In some cases it is difficult to determine if the direct inspiration came from the empire or if it was mediated through a southern Greek conduit (as in the case of rhyta as they appear earlier on southern Greek hero banquet and related reliefs: e.g. Dentzer 1982: pp. 340–341), or indeed if the domestication was restricted to iconography alone, though actual rhyta may well have been known to the Macedonian elite (Zimi 2011: p. 16).

Beyond *realia* there is slight evidence that Macedonians may also have adopted some concepts and practices current in the Achaemenid realm. The hunt frieze over the façade of Tomb II of the Great Tumulus at Vergina has been much debated. Regardless if it was executed before or after Alexander’s campaigns, it depicts a Persian-style multiple-prey hunt: an ideology-laden theme unknown in the Greek world but documented in the Achaemenid east and consistent with Macedonian hunting ideology. Equally, the lion hunt (with its strong Achaemenid associations) was popular among Alexander’s successors as a medium through which they could emphasize their links with the great conqueror (Paspalas 2000). In contrast, a possible failed attempt to adopt Achaemenid royal protocol in Europe may be evinced by an incident (Plutarch, *Phokion* 33.8) in which Alexander III’s half-brother and successor,

Philip Arrhidaios, received ambassadors enthroned under a golden canopy – a practice that could not translate into a Macedonian milieu (Paspalas 2005).

The evidence suggests that the initial Macedonian reaction to recognizably Achaemenid items was one of emulation through adoption (e.g. calyx cup) or adaptation through reconfiguration (e.g. lion-griffin, “jug of Achaemenid type”). Such items were reformulated to cohere with local society as it developed. An element of appropriation may have been introduced after the Achaemenids’ defeat as Alexander is reported to have referred to his version of Persian dress as *spolia Persarum* (Curtius 6.6.5). Indeed, on a lost third-century tomb mural from Lefkadia a Macedonian horseman wears an eastern, sleeved, chiton (Brecoulaki 2006: pp. 219–221, pl. 77, 2). He is pictured running down a panic-stricken easterner – a stereotyped Persian – in a display of Macedonian superiority. Aspects too alien, such as Philip Arrhidaios’ golden canopied throne, did not find fertile ground. Echoes of Achaemenid material culture are most evident during the period of Alexander’s immediate successors including the funerary finds discussed above and aspects of monumental architecture such as double-animal capitals erected in the Aegean and Cyprus (Étienne 2002: pp. 270–271). In all instances the associations of *perserie* – even if recalibrated to a female sphere – remain positive and enhance the status and power of their commissioners.

Conclusion

The evidential base for the study of *perserie* in Athens and Macedonia differs, as did the two societies in question. A far larger iconographic corpus is available for Athens as is a greater range of artifacts. Nonetheless, both Athens and Macedonia effectively used, through changing circumstances, Persian-derived themes and objects to signal status differences; the Achaemenid Empire, owing to its wealth and power, retained a grandeur that even official anti-Persian rhetoric could not erase. Indeed, the Achaemenids could offer models for the articulation of the Athenian imperial enterprise and possibly for royal Macedonian aspirations as well (cf. Philip II’s enthroned statue: Diodoros 16.92.5; 16.95.1). With Alexander’s successes Macedonians could erect monuments that celebrated their military achievement and simultaneously appropriate status-granting *realia* from the defeated empire.

Although some adoptions and adaptations at Athens and in Macedonia can be well paralleled by finds from the imperial center, it is increasingly clear that western Anatolia played an important role in acquainting the peoples of the Greek peninsula with elite practices of the empire, which were then variously transformed into meaningful components of Athenian and Macedonian society respectively.

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CHAPTER 99

Jewish Perspectives on Persia

Erich S. Gruen

The Book of Ezra begins with a glowing tribute to Cyrus. The Persian conqueror had toppled Babylon and released the people of Israel from their Babylonian captivity. As the text has it, Cyrus proclaimed that God infused him with the spirit to issue a proclamation throughout the realm that would gladden the hearts of the Israelites. Cyrus' decree announced that God placed all the kingdoms of the earth in his hands and entrusted him with the task of building a house of the Lord in Jerusalem (Ezra, 1:1–2; so also 2 Chron. 36:22–23). The Persian king thus emerges as benefactor of the Jews – in the Jews' own presentation. And not for the first time. The text of Second-Isaiah offers a striking construct. In its account, the prophet Isaiah had already forecast Cyrus' triumphs over nations and the crushing of foreign princes (Isaiah, 41:2, 41:25, 45:1, 48:14–15). More importantly, he looked ahead to the king's release of Israelites from their Babylonian exile and the rebuilding of their Temple in the land of their fathers (Isaiah, 44:28, 45:13). The prophecies may, of course, be post-eventum (cf. Kuhrt 1990: p. 145; Baltzer 2001: pp. 30–32; Goldstein 2002: pp. 158–160). But the Jewish conceptualization of Cyrus' role in reestablishing their place in the homeland is clear.

The positive image of Persia predominates. Yet the picture of Cyrus is a curiously passive one. Deutero-Isaiah represents the king as mere tool in the hands of Yahweh. The Lord simply summoned him like a bird of prey from the east to swoop down and bring to pass the purpose of the divine (Isaiah, 46:11). Cyrus indeed needs to be instructed as to his duties. He had not known God and has to be enlightened regarding his ways and his unquestioned

authority. His very name and title is owed to God. And, most significantly, he appears as the anointed one of the Lord (Isaiah, 45:1–7). None of this gives any credit to the Achaemenid dynasty. It was simply the latest in a long line of kingdoms that served the will of God, whether in punishing or rewarding the children of Israel. The Jewish historian Josephus, in his lengthy rewriting of the Bible, long after its composition, understood it in exactly that way. Indeed he took it a step further. In Josephus' version, Cyrus actually read the Book of Isaiah, found in it the prophet's declaration that God would make the Persian a ruler of many great nations, would instruct him to bring the Israelites back to their ancestral home, and would authorize him to rebuild the Temple. The king, therefore, got his inspiration for this task by poring over the text of the Bible itself (Jos. *Ant.* 11.1–7)! Insofar as these portraits convey a Jewish sense of Achaemenid presence in the Levant at its origins, history was essentially part of a divine scheme.

The authors of Ezra-Nehemiah repeat that motif and expand that theme. Cyrus' decree that authorized the Jews to return to Judah and reinstall the Temple declared that the idea came from God himself, the god whose house was in Jerusalem and who had accorded him earthly dominion everywhere (Ezra, 1:2–3). There is little likelihood in fact that the king proclaimed to all the Persian realm that he owed his position to the Jewish deity, a posture that few would have taken seriously and fewer still would have reckoned as acceptable (Grabbe 1998: pp. 126–128; Bedford 2001: pp. 114–129). It was a Jewish literary construct. For them, Cyrus' successes were best explained and most readily embraced by making him the agent of the Lord.

The king's orders, according to Ezra-Nehemiah, went beyond release of the exiles and reconstruction of the Temple. He directed that all the treasures that had been looted from the First Temple by the Babylonians be restored, even providing a detailed inventory of every bowl, basin, and vessel (Ezra, 1:7–11). Cyrus' magnanimous gesture, however, seemed to have little effect. Actual rebuilding did not take place until the reign of Darius 20 years later. The text of Ezra does its best to account for the delay by alleging disputes and conflicts over who was to supervise and implement the construction itself (Ezra, 4:1–24). That account is transparently concocted, an artificial creation set in the reign of Artaxerxes, who did not, in fact, take the throne for well over half a century later. The Jewish author either did not know his Persian history and muddled the chronological sequence of Achaemenid kings, or else did not much care. The text itself, in any case, is something of a patchwork, and literary form takes precedence over historical accuracy.

Regardless of historicity or lack thereof, the picture that emerges is noteworthy with regard to the depiction of Persian rule. What we get is a narrative in which "Artaxerxes" receives communication from inhabitants of Judah who wish to resist the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, prompting the

king to search historical records, learn of dissent and sedition in that region, and call the building project to a halt. It did not resume until the second year of the reign of Darius (Ezra, 4:7–24). That last may be accurate from a historical point of view, vouched for also by the testimony of the contemporary prophets, Haggai and Zachariah (Haggai, 1:1–14; Zacch. 1:1, 1:16–17; Ezra, 5:1–2, 6:14–15). But, whatever the facts, the portrayal of the Achaemenids deserves scrutiny. When the Persian governor of the province inquired of Jewish elders by what authority they were rebuilding the Temple, they replied by referring to the edict of Cyrus, issued, so it appears, two decades earlier. The governor then referred the matter back to the crown, with a request to search the royal archives for Cyrus' decree. Darius' agents had to do some scurrying about. No such document could be found in Babylon; it turned up only in Ecbatana. The form, language, and content (this one was in Aramaic, rather than Hebrew) provided by the text of Ezra were rather different from those of the decree earlier recorded by the same text (Ezra, 6:1–5; cf. 1:1–4). Many have debated whether one or the other (or neither) has a claim on authenticity. No matter. The discrepancies only underscore the literary character of the work.

Darius, according to the narrative, proceeded to instruct his governor to support fully the rebuilding of the Temple. He even directed the governor to pay the Jews' expenses and to supply their every need on a daily basis with an endless stream of food, oil, wine, and sacrificial animals (Ezra, 6:6–12). This seems excessive generosity. But Darius is far outdone in bountifulness by Artaxerxes, if we believe our author. He credits that king with the assignment of Ezra, the Jewish scribe, sage, and scholar, to oversee the appointment of judges and magistrates who would administer the law of God and the law of the king in Judah. To that end Artaxerxes showers wealth and goods upon Ezra of a scale that could hardly be transported from Susa to Jerusalem without a vast caravan and a whole army as escort, let alone expended within a lifetime (Ezra, 7:11–26, 8:24–30). The excess here borders on the absurd (Grabbe 1998: pp. 138–141).

The image of the rulers thus delivers a rather mixed message. They may show favor to the Jews, but they hardly represent admirable leaders or statesmen. Cyrus had given permission to restore Jerusalem to its glory days but either failed to carry out his promises or lacked the will to overcome opposition to them. "Artaxerxes" found himself manipulated by the inhabitants of Judah who resisted the reconstruction of Jerusalem. Darius did not even know where to discover Cyrus' decree, and then, when it was produced, acted upon it with unrestrained lavishness, exceeded only by the extravagance of Artaxerxes in outfitting the mission of Ezra. Benevolence here crosses the boundary into sheer grandiosity.

The Jewish authors were not naïve compilers or simple expounders of a pious line. They stressed the magnanimity of the Achaemenids, their backing

and support for the Jewish exiles, and their repatriation to the homeland. But they made clear that the rulers acted under the impetus and guidance of Yahweh whose hand directed it all. And they supplied enough hints to indicate that the Persian leadership had its foibles and flaws, hardly paragons of virtue. In this literary frame, Jews benefited from the actions of the Achaemenids but were not beholden to them. The point comes through with special clarity. Jewish writers felt no need to laud the Persian Empire.

The allusions to Achaemenid limitations, failings, and excesses reflect motifs in Jewish literature that were magnified in later texts. A strong comic strain exists in the depiction of Persian princes and policy by Jewish writers of the fourth century and the Hellenistic period. A mocking spirit prevails, giving Jews the satisfaction of humbling those who once held sway over them.

The Book of Esther stands as a prime example. It presents Jews in a shaky and vulnerable position as subjects of the Persian empire. As the celebrated tale has it, the Persian monarch Ahasuerus (evidently Xerxes), under the influence of his powerful chief minister Haman, issued an order to massacre all the Jews of his realm and confiscate their property. This mass genocide was prevented only in the nick of time through a bizarre episode in which Haman was discovered in the lap of the king's wife, the Jewess Esther. Ahasuerus now turned his wrath upon the minister. Under the persuasion of Esther and her cousin Mordecai, he reversed his order and authorized the Jews to inflict upon their Persian enemies the very slaughter that had been planned for them.

On the face of it, this text underscores the precarious character of Jewish existence under Persian rule and calls attention to the autocracy and potential unleashing of terror by the Achaemenid regime. But that interpretation takes the story too seriously and mistakes it for a reflection, however indirect and distorted, of historical reality.

The Book of Esther, in fact, is replete with comic parody (Radday 1990: pp. 295–313; Whedbee 1998: pp. 171–190; Berlin 2001: pp. xv–xxii; Gruen 2002: pp. 137–48). The monarch emerges less as a menace than as a buffoon. That characterization appears right at the start when Ahasuerus assembles the entire military, political, and administrative officialdom of the realm for six months to display the vast wealth and splendid glory of his majesty and to entertain all in a lavish banquet (Est. 1:1–8). The theme of Achaemenid excessive extravagance recurs here, now in a more fantastic setting which suggests that the king would strip his empire bare of all ministers, generals, and bureaucrats just to host a sumptuous and ongoing party. The mockery proceeds as Ahasuerus is spurned by his wife when he sought to parade her before his guests, and he then proclaims to all the world that wives must obey their husbands, an unenforceable edict that only advertises his own fatuousness (Est. 1:10–22). The threat to exterminate all the Jews in the empire was the doing of Haman, not Ahasuerus, prompted by a mere slight from Mordecai. The king who had

previously not even been aware of the existence of Jews was simply manipulated by his vizier (Est. 3:1–15). The theme of the wicked minister and the witless monarch is a common one in Jewish writings and elsewhere, a common literary device that has little to do with history – but much with representation.

Haman's downfall came in stages, aided by accident and by the actions of Esther and of Mordecai, but hardly to the credit of Ahasuerus. The author of the tale misses no opportunity to lampoon the Achaemenid king. He has him attempt to cure insomnia by reading the royal annals, the most soporific of publications, only to notice therein that Mordecai the Jew had once supplied information that saved the king's life, a rather important event (one might think) that Ahasuerus had altogether forgotten. This began the reversal of fortune. The absent-minded monarch now bestowed his favor on Mordecai and downgraded Haman (Est. 6:1–13). Esther managed to maneuver the situation further in the interests of the Jews. She wheedled out of the infatuated Ahasuerus a promise to grant her any wish. With that opportunity, she immediately requested a reversal of his order to exterminate the Jews. The hapless king had forgotten even that the order had been issued and who had persuaded him to do it. Esther fingered the villain, and Haman, cringing in terror, pleaded for his life and threw himself upon the queen's mercy. Ahasuerus, as dull-witted as ever, mistook the act as one of attempted rape, and finally had his minister executed. The Jews were thus spared, indeed encouraged to turn their arms upon their own would-be assailants. The text pointedly ascribes this startling turnabout not to any discerning comprehension by the king, but to his own mistaken perception of the scene (Est. 7–8; Levenson 1997: p. 104). And, as if this were not enough, the author has Ahasuerus rejoice in the news that 500 enemies of the Jews were slain in Susa alone – ignoring completely that they were his own Persian garrison (Est. 9:6–11)! The Book of Esther goes beyond a portrait of the ludicrous ruler and the foiling of the evil minister. The Persian satraps and soldiery come off poorly as well. Ahasuerus, after reversing his order, had written to the governors of all his provinces, directing them to authorize the Jews to take vengeance on all their enemies, even specifying the very day and month on which this bloody retaliation would take place. If the text were to be understood as given, the Persians must have presented themselves meekly for the slaughter – apart from those who hastily converted to Judaism! The Jews succeeded in slaying 75 000, without losing a man (Est. 8:9–13, 9:16; Wills 1995: pp. 95–108). This is more than fantasy. It constitutes a deliberately concocted theater of the absurd that spoofs the Achaemenid ruler and comically caricatures his Persian subjects.

A comparable construct occurs in the Book of Daniel. The famous tale of Daniel in the lions' den features another weak and ineffectual king manipulated by villainous counselors. This time the royal figure, "Darius the Mede," seems

to be sheer invention. No such individual can be found anywhere in the historical record. Nor does he appear in any other text. But the composer of the work (or this part of the work) employed him as an evocative image of a Persian (or perhaps Median) king (Collins 1993: pp. 30–32). And he hardly emerges as an admirable character. This Darius holds sway over a kingdom with 120 satraps, evidently the Persian Empire, who reported to three trusted royal counselors, one of whom was the devout Jew Daniel. Whether a Jew could hold so lofty a position in the hierarchy was a matter of indifference to the story-teller. Only the story mattered. Daniel's superior skills and impeccable virtue put the other ministers and satraps in the shade, fostering jealousy and conspiracy. When the king contemplated setting him up as second in authority only to himself, plots ripened. The evil ministers convinced Darius to issue a measure to forbid all subjects from offering up a petition to any man or god other than the king himself. Violators would be thrown to the lions. Darius, compliant and clueless, duly agreed. As the ministers knew, but Darius for some reason did not, the pious Daniel could not be persuaded to forgo his daily prayers to God. The plan played out to perfection, Daniel was found in violation of the decree and hurled into the lions' den, much to the chagrin of the king who could not save him without rescinding his own inviolable orders (Dan. 5:30–6:14).

"Darius the Mede," like Ahasuerus in the Book of Esther, appears as an inept and shallow character, putty in the hands of clever and scheming ministers. Sympathetic though he be to the plight of Daniel, his efforts to rescue him were futile, and he could do no more than hope (without great confidence) that Daniel's god would heed his call and come to his aid. That, of course, did indeed happen, as God clamped shut the mouths of the lions and Daniel emerged unscathed. Darius, fearful to the end, was hugely relieved and overjoyed. Like Ahasuerus in this also he took ferocious vengeance on evil counselors, throwing not only them to the wild beasts but their wives and children as well (Dan. 6:15–25).

The author of the Book of Daniel has no warm feelings for Persians. The king may have shown good judgment in appointing Daniel as advisor. But he possessed no strength of character, was easily hoodwinked by malevolent ministers, proved helpless and pathetic in trying to save Daniel, and then turned savage in punishing enemies. "Darius the Mede" has nothing to recommend him. The invention of this character could have no other motive than to mock and denigrate the rulers of the realm.

Canonical texts do not exhaust the story. Hellenistic Jews produced variants on these texts, compositions in Greek, aimed largely at diaspora Jews in the Hellenic Mediterranean. The portraits of Persians that they presented moved along much the same lines, equally irreverent and still more light-hearted.

The narrative of Ezra-Nehemiah appeared in a Greek version, to which has been affixed the title *I Esdras*. The work constitutes more an adaptation than

a translation. It parallels much of what we possess in the Hebrew text but rearranged, rewritten, and recast (Talshir 1999: pp. 5–57). For some scholars, the Greek rendition precedes the Hebrew or relies on an earlier text (Fried 2011: pp. 1–7). Whichever composition has priority, one portion of I Esdras stands out as exceptional. It has no parallel in the Hebrew version and, on any reckoning, is a later insertion. But it exhibits the whimsicality and humor of Jewish writings on Persia – and at Persian expense.

The tale conveys a fable of three youths and a contest at the royal court. It is set in the age of Darius. Like the Book of Esther, it opens with the scene of a lavish banquet hosted by the king and attended by all the officials of the empire. That too is a recurring motif, signaling the luxury and ostentation of the eastern court. The tale, however, has its own peculiar and amusing character. After a long evening of food and drink, we are told, Darius went to bed to sleep it off, but had only a fitful sleep (I Esdras, 3.1–3). The three young men who served as bodyguards for the king, perhaps restless with little to do, concocted a wager among themselves. Each would write down the thing that he regarded as the strongest, would leave a note to that effect under the king's pillow, and when Darius awoke he would give judgment on which choice was best. The guardsmen even anticipated the rewards which Darius would bestow upon the winner: expensive gifts and trophies, purple garb, jewelry, his own chariot, an honored place next to the king, and the title of royal kinsman (I Esdras, 3.4–9). To mandate rewards in advance seems somewhat brazen. But then this is folktale fantasy.

Darius duly went along with the game. When day dawned and he had read the three notes, he treated the matter with solemn ceremony. The whole court was summoned, including the satraps, generals, district governors, and chief magistrates who had come from all over the empire. The monarch presided in the council hall and asked each of the young bodyguards in turn to make a case for his choice (I Esdras, 3.13–16).

The first, interestingly enough, opted for wine as preeminent in strength. It addles the brain, setting the mind of king and orphan, slave and free, poor and rich on the same level. It turns every thought to joy and delight, repressing all pain and debt, and allowing one to forget king and satrap alike. Under the influence of wine, men forget friends and brothers, take too hastily to the sword, and never remember the next morning what they have done the night before. What could possibly compare to the power of drink (I Esdras, 3.17–23)?

The second guardsman took what might seem to be a more promising line. He pointed to the strength of the king. He underscored royal authority that exercises dominion over all men, issues orders, whether for war or for peace, for cultivation or for destruction, exacts tribute, and demands obedience – which is given unequivocally and without dissent. Subjects and armies alike bow in submission to the power of the king. And bodyguards devote

their lives to his service. With such abject submissiveness, how could the king's power not be the strongest (I Esdras, 4.1–12)?

The third youth had a very different and rather more baffling approach to the subject. He argued a strong case for one position, then abruptly abandoned it for another halfway through. This bodyguard alone is identified by name, none other than Zerubbabel, known from the biblical version as a rebuilders of the Temple. This connection stitches the folktale together, however indirectly, with the larger narrative of the return from exile and establishment of the Second Temple. Zerubbabel concedes that wine and kings were strong, but he had a better candidate. Women rule the roost over both. They are responsible for giving birth to all men, including kings, and they rear those who plant the vineyards. As if that were not enough, their allure can entice any man into forsaking almost everything of value, whether wealth, property, parents, or native land. Men's every effort is devoted to the advantage of their wives, indeed they can be driven to distraction by them, fall into criminality, slavery, or self-destruction over them. And, if anyone questions this choice, says Zerubbabel, he can point to an episode in which the king himself was putty in the hands of his concubine who removed his crown, put it on her own head, and gave the sovereign a little slap for good measure. That would appear to clinch the case for female ascendancy and overweening power (I Esdras, 4.13–32).

Yet Zerubbabel suddenly made an about-face. He sobered up and announced that he had a still better candidate: the concept of truth. All heaven and earth proclaim her incomparable strength. Wine, women, and kings all act unjustly, as do all sons of men, injustice clings to all their acts, and, since they lack truth, they are doomed to perish in their injustice. Truth alone endures indefinitely, and to her alone belong regal power, authority, and majesty (I Esdras, 4.33–40). That rhetorical flair carried the day. Darius gave the young man a seat next to the throne and the right to be called the king's kinsman, and promised to grant any wish his heart desired. Zerubbabel made one request only: that the ruler fulfill the vow made at the beginning of his reign, to rebuild Jerusalem and to send back to the city all the vessels that had been confiscated and that Cyrus promised to return from among the spoils of Babylon. Darius readily concurred, and issued orders to all relevant personnel to see to the reconstruction. Indeed he did more: the sovereign provided immensely generous resources for implementing the project and he sent off Zerubbabel with an elaborate escort that included a marching band (I Esdras, 4.42–5.3).

How this story came to be inserted in the text of I Esdras has yet to be discovered. Some have suggested that it served to supply background and explanation for Zerubbabel's appointment to the job of rebuilding the Temple (Myers 1974: pp. 9–12). Perhaps. But that purpose could easily have been

achieved by a more plausible and logical tale. More likely, the author or interpolator took pleasure in the anecdote for it fit the pattern of many fables portraying the wise Jewish counselor at the court of the foreign king, like the narratives of Daniel and Esther. And it could do the double duty of also connecting with the biblical account of the Temple's reconstruction.

The story itself, whatever its intended role, offers another revealing window on Jewish attitudes toward Persian rule. Darius, of course, acts as magnanimous monarch, authorizing, encouraging, and financing the noble venture of Zerubbabel, the same admirable part he played in Ezra-Nehemiah. Yet the whimsicality of this text cannot be missed and needs to be emphasized (Gruen 1998: pp. 166–167). The Persian monarch does not stride across this scene as a forceful sovereign. The very idea of Darius staging a contest at the whim of his three youthful bodyguards and promising sumptuous rewards that they themselves had dictated is preposterous. Still more preposterous is a scenario in which the king sits silently while he and indeed monarchy itself are criticized, satirized, and mocked. All three of the youths, each in his own way, took the opportunity to cast aspersions on Achaemenid rule. The first, in lauding the strength of wine, made a point of noting twice that it befuddles kings as well as others, causing them to lose their grip on reality and misbehave in alarming ways (I Esdras, 3.18–23). The second, while extolling the power of kings, goes overboard in his presentation, illustrating his argument with reference to the absolutism and autocracy of the monarch who can compel men to war on one another, kill and be killed, ravage and devastate lands, and bring him the fruit of their toil whenever he demands it. Undeviating obedience is the lot of all subjects (I Esdras, 4.2–12). That is hardly a flattering portrait. Zerubbabel himself does not exactly burnish the royal image. He observes that the ranks of men who are infatuated by their women and cater to their every whim include no less a personage than Darius himself. He further reports the delicious anecdote, in which Darius' concubine took the royal crown and placed it on her own head, punctuating the act by slapping the king's face. Darius was dumbfounded but docile. He accepted the public embarrassment without a word, part of a pattern, according to Zerubbabel. The king always laughed with his concubine when she laughed at him, and if she was annoyed with him, he would cater to her and try to mollify her (I Esdras, 4.28–32). And even when Zerubbabel changed his tune and praised truth as the ultimate source of power, the monarchy did not escape unscathed. The Jewish bodyguard observed that in the absence of truth, injustice prevails, an inescapable feature of wine, men, women – and kings (I Esdras, 4.36–37).

The whole scenario is redolent with irony. No rational servant of the king would dream of uttering such censures or acting with such insubordination. And no self-respecting monarch could possibly have sat through this series of strictures without exploding in fury. Darius instead meekly concurred with

Zerubbabel, granted his wish, and gave him much more than he asked for. The author made use of folktale motifs to picture the Persian king as a simpleton and invent a comic interchange for the amusement of his Jewish readership. Irreverence rather than seriousness predominates. And, as in the books of Daniel and Esther, the Achaemenids emerge as feeble and inept sovereigns.

Parody of Persian princes took even more derisive form in the Greek additions to the Book of Daniel. The translation of the canonical text incorporated certain independent tales unconnected to the main narrative and inserted perhaps for amusement or edification. Whether composed originally in Greek or based on Semitic models remains a question. The motley combination of stories has no cohesion and little affiliation with the rest of the Book of Daniel (Moore 1977: pp. 23–34; Schürer 1986: pp. 722–730). But the stories carry some interesting implications for the Jewish willingness to toy with the image of the Achaemenids.

Among the additions was a double fiction, usually referred to as “Bel and the Dragon,” two separate stories fastened together in artificial fashion. What they have in common is a mischievous representation of relations between Cyrus and his purported counselor Daniel.

The first narrative sets Cyrus in Babylon shortly after the Persian occupation of the city. Daniel accompanied the king as the most honored of all his friends. Cyrus was enamored of Babylonian ritual and had become a devotee of the Mesopotamian deity Bel (Baal). Indeed the king was so infatuated that he went daily to the temple of Bel to worship a representation of the god. He was especially impressed by the fact that the piety of the Babylonians extended to bringing great quantities of flour, sheep, and wine daily to be consumed by the god. And consume them he evidently did, since nothing was left the next morning after the deposit of the stores. Cyrus then urged Daniel to show reverence to such a divinity whose existence was assured by the daily disappearance of such vast amounts of food and drink. Daniel, of course, declined, he had reverence only for his own god, and he laughed at the king for confusing an idol of clay and bronze for a living god (Dan. 14:1–7).

That prompted some second thoughts on Cyrus’ part. He summoned the Babylonian priests in some irritation, demanding that they be put to the test: either prove that Bel has been eating the provisions or go to their doom; if they do prove it, Daniel suffers execution. This too is a motif not unfamiliar in folktales. The priests were ready with a plan: bring in the stores and seal the entrance to the sanctuary, so that no one but the god could have access to the stores. They were secure in their knowledge of a hidden underground staircase which they and their families regularly employed to take the provisions and consume them. Daniel, however, was a step ahead. He anticipated the scheme and had ashes spread on the floor of the temple. Sure enough, the devious

priests went through their nightly ritual and unknowingly left tell-tale marks in the ashes. The king arrived at dawn, unsealed the doors, found the food and wine gone, and rejoiced in the proof that the god had indeed devoured it all. Indeed, he almost strode jauntily into the chamber where he would have scattered the ashes and destroyed the evidence. Daniel had to hold him back physically, laughing once more at Cyrus' fatuousness. Footprints in the ashes told the tale, Cyrus vented his wrath upon the false priests and all the well-fed members of their families, executing men, women, and children, and even turning the statue of Bel over to Daniel who promptly smashed it, together with the temple (Dan. 14:8–22). The Jew as wise counselor and the king as credulous dolt follow a familiar line already seen more than once in the material discussed here.

The second tale probably began life as a separate tradition but got attached as another instance of Achaemenid dull-wittedness. The king is not explicitly identified, but the interpolator makes the connection by having him assert to Daniel that this time he has another Babylonian deity, a living creature to worship, a snake or dragon, and thus truly worthy of devotion. Cyrus is obviously meant. Daniel, however, maintains adherence to his own god and proposes to show the king that the creature is no divinity by offering to kill it without recourse to sword or club. The Jewish advisor got permission and proceeded to feed the dragon a meal of pitch, fat, and hair duly blended together as cakes or loaves. The great snake devoured the concoction and promptly burst his insides. "So much for your objects of worship," Daniel mocked (Dan. 14:23–27).

The story continues but veers in a different direction, probably the consequence of a third anecdote tacked onto this one. The Babylonians, learning of the fate of their deity and the execution of their priests, rose in fury, denounced the king as having become a Jew, and insisted that Daniel be surrendered to them or else they would slaughter the royal family. The king meekly complied. There followed a version of the lion's den fable. Daniel was hurled into a pit with seven lions, and left for six days. But a new twist on the tale gave it additional flavor. Instead of just clamping the jaws of the lions, the Lord made sure that Daniel would have some sustenance during his stay in the den. An angel appeared to the prophet Habakkuk who had just prepared a modest meal for harvesters in the field, plucked him up by the hair, and swept him unceremoniously to Babylon, where he dropped the dinner down to the surprised and grateful Daniel – only to be whisked back to his homeland again. Daniel managed to stretch the meal until the seventh day, when the king arrived, prepared to mourn, but discovered with joy that his beloved counselor was still alive. The king now declared himself a devotee of Daniel's god, pulled him out of the den, and tossed in instead the wicked plotters who had hoped to do away with him. The lions finished them in an instant (Dan. 14:28–42).

The meaning of these tales has been endlessly discussed. A principal feature plainly is the exposure of idolatry as empty and meaningless (Roth 1975:pp. 42–43; Moore 1977: p. 127; Wills 1990: pp. 131–33). That theme courses through much of biblical and post-biblical literature. Here the parodic elements predominate. Babylonian priests appear as deceitful manipulators of the monarch, as mountains of food and drink disappear every night. Wicked plots are discovered, evil counselors punished, and brass idols smashed. A bizarre meal causes a false god to explode into bits and pieces, and Daniel gets sustenance in the lions' lair from a flying angel pulling a befuddled prophet by the hair. Humor abounds (Wills 1995: pp. 60–65; Gruen 1998: 167–172). To find serious messages in all this would miss the playfulness and wit of the authors or transmitters who were more interested in theatrics than theology. The tales toyed with conventional motifs: the “idol parody,” the Jew at the royal court, the scheming ministers who are foiled at the end by the admirable and effective counselor. The employment of these motifs, however, was not altogether random. Each of the tales takes a poke at the Achaemenid ruler. The credulous Cyrus was led astray by conniving priests, made obeisance to a dumb idol, and nearly spoiled the clever trap that Daniel had set for catching the criminals. No wonder that Daniel twice burst out laughing at the gullible sovereign. And Cyrus did no better with the serpent god, watching helplessly as Daniel blew him apart, then yielding sheepishly to the bullying of the Babylonians, and finally serving as hapless bystander at the rescue of his counselor. The irreverence shown to the Achaemenids in texts like Esther, Daniel, and I Esdras has here turned into full-blown insolence. This does not, of course, sound a clarion call for rebellion against the Persian empire. Whatever the origins of these texts, the versions that we possess date well after the fall of the Achaemenids. The texts have a different significance. Jews painted a retrospective portrait and one that presented Persians less as fearsome than as feckless.

Why? No easy answers. Jews, so far as our very limited evidence goes, did not seem to suffer under Persian rule. The texts of Deutero-Isaiah, Ezra-Nehemiah, Daniel, I Esdras, and the Greek Additions to Daniel show no Persian hostility to Jews as such. Only the Book of Esther suggests antagonism, but the proposed genocide issued from an evil vizier, not from the throne, the decree was reversed, and the carnage came at the hands of the Jews. What then would be the motive for representing the Achaemenids as incompetent dullards? A sense of retrospective satisfaction doubtless played a role. Jews were a subordinate people in the social and political circumstances of the Persian empire. But they could take pleasure in circulating tales that stressed their superiority in cleverness and wit, that placed them at the centers of authority, that called attention to the foibles and follies of the sovereigns, and that exhibited Jews as shapers of royal actions and policy. The fantasies were not simply consolation for the inequalities of real power, let alone for the endurance of oppression. The entertainment value of these stories merits emphasis. Jewish writers created

fanciful memories of Achaemenid regimes whose rulers could be mocked, manipulated, and molded to serve Jewish ends.

Little attention is paid to Persia in subsequent Jewish texts. But a few stray items are worth noting. They suggest that some writings went beyond amusing derision to a more adversarial conceptualization.

The *Letter of Aristeas*, a Jewish composition probably of the second century BCE which treated the supposed circumstances in which the Hebrew Bible was translated into Greek in Alexandria, includes a quite surprising statement. The author, through the mouth of one of his characters, asserts that among the many Jews who have settled in Egypt there were those who had been expelled from Jerusalem by the Persians when they were in power (*Let Arist.* 35; cf. *Jos. Ant.* 12.45). The claim should pull any reader up short. In effect, it turns on its head the whole traditional narrative. The Persians, instead of releasing Jews from captivity in Babylon and facilitating their return to Jerusalem, on this scenario actually drove them from Jerusalem into Egypt where their compatriots would be reduced to servitude. The account is most peculiar and paradoxical. No other source anywhere corroborates the statement, and it would be sharply at odds with Persian policy generally. The remark may be an error, or a confusion. But, however dubious its historicity, the fact that it could be said by the Jewish author is noteworthy. The idea that Persians conducted a forcible removal of Jews from the homeland was evidently plausible to the writer and to his audience.

A comparable idea was plausible also to the first century CE Jewish historian Josephus. He transmits the report that Persians deported many thousands of Jews to Babylonia (*Jos. CAp.* 1.194; Bar-Kochva 1996: pp. 143–44; Barclay 2007: p. 112). Here the reversal of the standard narrative is even starker: Persians drive Jews to Babylon instead of releasing them from Babylon. Drawing on the Hellenistic Jewish author who adopted the pseudonym Hecataeus, Josephus observes further that the Jews' loyalty to their faith stiffened their resolve to endure even the most hideous of persecutions, such as the repeated abuses they suffered at the hands of Persian kings and satraps (*Jos. CAp.* 1.191; cf. *Ant.* 11.184; Bar-Kochva 1996: pp. 91–97; Barclay 2007: p. 111). This information, also sharply at odds with actual Achaemenid policy in the satrapies of the empire, indicates that some Jewish voices in the Hellenistic period cast their people's experience under the Persians in a far harsher light. Josephus elsewhere denounces alleged Persian practices such as their ferocious xenophobia, abuse of other people's wives, and castration of children (*Jos. CAp.* 2.269–270; Barclay 2007: p. 322). The charges are questionable and unsupported. But they do disclose a darker image of Persia that took shape in retrospect.

The preeminent Jewish philosopher, Philo of Alexandria in the first century CE, had no occasion or motive to write about Persia. But one comment in his corpus may be pertinent. In treating the topic of overweening ambition and colossal folly, Philo singles out the Persian monarch Xerxes in his celebrated invasion of Greece. Xerxes endeavored to bridge over the Hellespont and to

punch deep holes into Mt Athos where salt water could be poured, thus turning sea into land and land into sea, and he sought to vie with the heavens themselves by firing arrows at celestial bodies. The mad Achaemenid thus exemplified the very height of *hybris* and impiety (Philo, *De Somniis*, 2.115–120). This, of course, was no condemnation of Persians in general, and Philo drew here on Greek rather than Jewish sources. Nevertheless, the singling out of Xerxes as the most conspicuous example of impious arrogance does offer a clue to the attitudes of Jewish intellectuals toward the Persian monarchy. No humor here, just animosity.

More indirect hints might just possibly be discerned in the Book of Judith. This novella tells the edifying tale of a massive assault upon the nation of Israel by the forces of King Nebuchadnezzar (identified as ruler of Assyria), thwarted almost single-handedly by the heroic deeds of the Jewess Judith. On the face of it, no mention of Persia exists in the narrative. But scholars have labored to detect suggestions of Achaemenid history between the lines. Persian names appear in the text, Holofernes (Orophernes) and Bagoas. It happens that those were also the names of two generals who campaigned under Artaxerxes III in his attack on Phoenicia and Palestine in the 350s BCE (Diod. 16.47.4, 31.19.2–3). Was the invasion by “Nebuchadnezzar” then just a screen for what really occurred under Artaxerxes III (cf. Schürer 1986: pp. 217–218; Otzen 2002: pp. 85–86)? That may be far-fetched. But parallels can be found in Herodotus’ account of Xerxes’ invasion of Greece. Quite apart from the general echoes of an attack by a vast empire under a hybriatic and tyrannical ruler, then turned back by the determined smaller nation, there are more striking correspondences. One might note, for instance, the demand made for earth and water, an Achaemenid practice, as we know from Herodotus (Jud. 2.7; Herod. 6.48, 6.94). Other intimations too suggest themselves, like the royal council called to discuss the invasion that appears both in Herodotus and in Judith, and perhaps even the siege of Bethulia, described as a narrow gateway to Judaea, a possible mirror of Thermopylae (Jud. 2.2–3, 4.6–7; Caponigro 1992: pp. 49–55). More striking still are the correspondences between Nebuchadnezzar’s onslaught against Arphaxad, king of the Medes, in the region of Ragau, as the Book of Judith recounts it, and the comparable attack by Darius, starting from Babylon, against the Median rebel Fravartish in a place called Raga, as recorded by the Behistun inscription (Jud. 1.5–15; DB, 24–25, 31–32; Rollinger 2009: pp. 429–443). How far these resonances are deliberate and how far they are inadvertent cannot be determined. But the indirect innuendoes may have been caught by some sharp-eyed and well-informed readers receptive to a tale of successful Jewish resistance to a vast foreign horde led by an overweening despot – which bore some resemblance to the imperialism of the Achaemenids.

We have yet another allusion to the negative image of Persia in Jewish eyes through a very different text. The Testament of Job, of uncertain date and

provenance, provides a novel and eccentric version of the Job story (Collins 1974: pp. 35–51; Spittler 1983: pp. 829–36; Gruen 2002: pp. 193–201). A passage in the portrayal of Satan is pertinent here. When the evildoer wiped out Job's flocks, authorized confiscation of all his property, and had his house collapse upon and kill his children, he was dressed in the garb of a Persian king (*TJob*, 17.1–18.1). The particular significance of that symbolism has never found explanation. But the fact that the Jewish author connected Persian royalty with the most heinous deeds affords a revealingly harsh view of the nation's reputation.

Later depictions had still darker hues. The Fifth Sibylline Oracle, composed in Jewish circles after the destruction of the Second Temple, depicts the emperor Nero as a ruthless butcher who wreaks devastation throughout east and west, including an assault on Jerusalem, and identifies him as the "Persian" (*5 Sib.* 93–110, 113, cf. 246–55; Collins 1983: pp. 390–392). That label presumably refers to legends that have Nero resurface after his death in the Parthian empire to seek vengeance upon Rome, "Parthia" being here assimilated to "Persia." But the deeply negative connotations now associated with Persia are noteworthy.

How had the mocking and comic portrayals, derisive but not destructive, shifted into a higher gear of censure and opprobrium? The answer clearly does not lie in any persecution by the Achaemenids who had long since disappeared when these texts were composed. Nor does it reflect memory of oppression for which no direct evidence exists and which would contravene standard Persian policy.

A somewhat different collective memory, however, may lurk behind these representations. A hint appears already in Ezra-Nehemiah. Ezra's prayer to the Lord acknowledges his people's sins over the centuries, justly punished by defeats, plunder, and captivity by their enemies. But he also recognizes a brief period of respite brought about by Persian rulers who extended their favor to Israel and allowed them to rebuild their city and their temple. The passage plainly sets Persia in a positive light. Yet even in that affirmative context, the author lets slip the underlying truth. He designates the Jews as slaves: God has not abandoned them in their servitude and has inspired the kings of Persia to sponsor the restoration of their temple – but servants they are (Ezra, 9:8–9; Williamson 1985: p. 136).

A later passage in Ezra-Nehemiah paints a still blacker picture. After the Israelites had been restored to Jerusalem and Ezra had read to them from the Book of the Law, they uttered another prayer to God. This one too, after praising the Lord, confessed to the host of sins, blasphemies, impieties, and misdeeds that Israelites had committed through the ages and for which God had justly punished them. And the prayer takes the story up to the present. God had given them back their land to enjoy its fruits. But they are slaves in that land, its produce provides advantage to the kings whom God has set over them, the Persians

rule over their bodies, and do what they will with their livestock, leaving the Israelites in real distress (Neh. 9.36–37; Blenkinsopp 1988: pp. 307–308).

These phrases resonate with pain. The release from exile, return to the homeland, and resurrection of the sacred shrine may have ushered in a new era. But there was no hiding the fact that the nation remained under the control and in the hands of the imperial power. That power may be temporarily benign, but it could always turn on its subordinates whose status was no better than that of slaves. This feature of Jewish existence in the Achaemenid era, though not dwelled upon in the texts, remained a dark undercurrent that surfaced periodically and disturbingly.

A puzzling but potent image in the Book of Daniel alludes to the depth of feeling on this score. Daniel received a vision of a terrifying celestial figure who forecast a future for his people. Daniel passed out at the sight but was revived and reassured. The other-worldly creature had come in response to Daniel's prayers and affirmed that they had been heard. But his arrival had been delayed for three weeks because of a lengthy contest with "a prince of the Persian kingdom." It had ended, but only temporarily, when the angel Michael arrived to bring help against the kings of Persia. The celestial messenger went on to deliver his prophecies, but his departure was imminent because he had to resume battle with the prince of Persia (Dan. 10:13, 10:20–21; cf. 12:1; Collins 1993: pp. 374–376). Nothing in this mysterious text suggests that it refers to actual kings of Persia. The symbolic significance takes precedence. The heavenly battle between the forces of good and evil is represented by the angel of the Lord on the one side, the ruler of Persia on the other.

For the Jews who looked back upon their experience in the Achaemenid era, the impression was not an uplifting one. Persians had, according to the master narrative, permitted them to return from exile and sponsored the reestablishment of the city and Temple. But in the retrospective vision, subordination and vulnerability became more prominent. Some Jewish writers took comfort in disparagement and mockery of Achaemenid rulers, others delivered a stronger dose of cynicism. Persians may not have been persecutors. But subjects of the empire had their own reasons for discontent. In the end they were still servants of the imperial power.

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CHAPTER 100

Perspectives in Europe in the Middle Ages and the Modern Era

Sabine Müller

Introduction

The Achaemenid Persian Empire continued to play a role in European cultural products from the Middle Ages up to the modern era. This role was as complex and ambiguous as it was manifold. Contrary to the idea of a general binary construction of west versus east (which of course also existed as one facet), there was no monolithic perception of ancient Persia in Europe (Bohrer 1998: p. 340), no adherent or closed system, no unitary form of reception by European “cultural agents” (Olmstedt 2009: p. 83). European ideas and imaginations of the Achaemenid Empire were multiple, transformable, sometimes contradictory or stereotypical, in any case dependent on the individual sociopolitical, cultural, intellectual, and narrative context. Certainly, there were major themes of reception. Hence, the Persians on war were a particular matter of interest, especially the Macedonian conquest of the Achaemenid Empire under Alexander III of Macedon and, also, Xerxes’ campaign against the Greek allies. In the times of the Crusades or the wars against the Ottoman Empire, in a contemporary coloring, the ancient Persians were paralleled with the eastern opponents. In consequence, the theme of the Achaemenid Empire on war became a political symbol within the framework of an ideological discourse on ruling power. However, this was one facet of a more complex phenomenon of reception. The Achaemenid Empire was not only seen one-dimensionally as a projection surface for the current political opponent. As the

attention was mainly focused on individual, mainly royal, political actors, Achaemenid kings could serve as exempla, either role models or negative foils. This is also true for the reception of their predecessors, the Teispid kings Cyrus II and Cambyses II. However, on the one hand, while the ancient Persian Empire and its protagonists were in great parts selected as a theme in order to mirror European matters, serving as foils for contemporary discourses, on the other hand, there also existed genuine interest in the Achaemenid past. This interest was fueled by the fascination for Persia, its cultural artifacts, and its history. European travelers, traders, and diplomats throughout the centuries were transmitters of cultural exchange, allowing glimpses into “Persian worlds.” Thus, commercial and diplomatic contacts, trade, and gift-giving as well as traveling reports helped to shape the images of Persia in the European collective memory, adding to the information in the ancient Greek and Latin sources. Especially during the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries, European travelers felt attracted to Persia and its historical sights, eager to explore the relicts of the ancient past (Harrison 2011: pp. 53–54). One famous example is the German cartographer and explorer Carsten Niebuhr (1733–1815), part of the Danish Arabia expedition, who visited the ruins of Persepolis where he copied the different cuneiform inscriptions so accurately that his publications marked a step toward the decipherment of cuneiform writing (Wiesehöfer 2002). The vitalized interest in Persia’s history left its traces in European literature, art, theater, and opera.

Hence, the European reception of Achaemenid Persia was based on the knowledge of the ancient Greek and Latin sources, combined with imaginations stemming from cultural contacts, military conflicts, diplomatic or economic exchanges, traveling accounts, and explorers’ reports. The European attitude toward the Achaemenid Empire cannot be generalized or categorized. It depended on the contemporary context and issues, the political, social, cultural, and intellectual backgrounds of the recipients, the medium of presentation of the subject matter, and its intention. Hence, there is a wide range of perceptions stemming from various motivations and diverse dimensions of genuine interest in Persian history. As this overview will show, in European cultural memory, the ancient Persian Empire can variously serve as a projection surface of political contemporary issues and discourses, as a decorative setting, constructed imaginary space of desire and fascination, or as an historical landscape predestined to satisfy the longing of scholars and explorers. Similarly, in European cultural products, Teispids and Achaemenids appear in multiple functions as negative political or moral counterimages, examples of pride, *hybris*, cruelty, and tyranny, foils for the virtues of their European opponents as well as virtuous role models, prototypes of mighty rulers, tragic heroes, or just standardized metaphors of kingship or stereotypes of European images of eastern kings.

The Influence of the *Alexander Romance*

In the Middle Ages, the image of the Achaemenid Empire was predominantly influenced by the enormous impact of the Greek *Alexander Romance*. Written by an anonymous author in late third-century BCE Egypt, most probably Alexandria (Stoneman 2008: p. 150), and erroneously attributed to Alexander's court historiographer Callisthenes by the manuscript tradition, it was a colorful, mostly fictitious, adventure story, a complex mixture of traditions from different times and cultures combining various literary genres such as biography, periplus, historiography, epic, or novel (Koulakiotis 2006: p. 232). Except for Egypt as a topographic key symbol, the Achaemenid Empire serves mainly as a setting for the adventures of Alexander as a traveling conqueror. He is cast into the role of a courageous scientific explorer challenging human boundaries, having to experience severe setbacks in order to become wise and chastened (Müller 2017). Thus, the war against Darius serves as a prologue or preliminary stage of the part of the story the author was actually interested in: Alexander's adventurous checking out limits in search of marvels (Stoneman 2008: pp. 67–90) in “an imaginary east” (Pretzler 2007: p. 52). The cause of war is unhistorical: the author claims that Macedonia was tributary to the Great King and Alexander early developed the plan to get rid of this Persian dominion (Ps.-Call. 1.23.2–6). It will have been a literary device in order to style Alexander as a fighter for freedom. In the *Alexander Romance*, this preliminary part of the narrative finishes with a happy ending (Müller 2012: pp. 301–302): after the Macedonian victories in the battles, King Darius is stabbed by traitors. Comforted by the magnanimous Alexander, Darius legitimated his succession by asking him to marry his daughter, incorrectly identified with Alexander's Bactrian wife Roxane, and continue his royal line (Ps.-Call. 2.20.4–9). Thus, Darius' last acts are the recognition of his former opponent as his legitimate successor and his expression of the wish to unite the two ruling houses by marriage.

Given this view on the Achaemenid Empire by the author of the Greek *Alexander Romance*, it has to be noted that the end of the empire and the Macedonian conquest were particularly points of focus in the minds of the recipients. Furthermore, it was Alexander who played the leading role as an iconic prototype of commander, conqueror, ruler, civilizer, explorer, and adventurer – and in the times of the crusades a role model of the ideal crusader (Franke 2000: p. 144). In addition, in the *Alexander Romance*, the topography of the Persian Empire is a symbolic construct of mental mapping. Far from geographic reality and military strategic sense (Merkelbach 1977: p. 16), the author drops names of places and sites that are of cultural significance, reminiscent of key aspects in the ancient literary legacy (Müller 2017). Furthermore, Alexander's zigzag course mirrors his character development

and the necessity to become mature and wise. Hence, the *Alexander Romance* neither provided the audience with solid information on the geography of the Achaemenid Empire nor was intended to do so. Details such as the description of the palace of Cyrus are also incredible (Stoneman 2008: p. 47). According to the *Alexander Romance*, the audience hall was decorated with a painting showing “Xerxes’ sea battle against the Athenians” (Ps.-Call. 3.28.13). Probably, this is a reference to the battle of Salamis. There are then several reasons why this description is more fantasy than history. In sum, the Persian Empire is presented as a land of gold, wealth, and luxury in accordance with Greek traditional imaginations (Stoneman 2008: pp. 44–45) where a hero can be romantic and heroic.

The ultimate source of many European Alexander Romances was the Latin translation of a version of Pseudo-Callisthenes’ text from Constantinople by Leo the Archpresbyter of Naples composed in the tenth century (Stoneman 2008: pp. 19, 202–203, 1999b: p. 238). Also known was the late antique Latin translation by Julius Valerius (Stoneman 1999a: pp. 174–178). Another source for the Medieval Alexander Romances was the *Historiae Alexandri Magni* by the Roman writer Quintus Curtius Rufus (Stoneman 2008: p. 210), predominantly dated to the first century CE. In consequence, Curtius Rufus’ portrayal of Darius III colored the medieval perceptions of the authors who worked with his text. Thus, in Walter of Châtillon’s epic *Alexandreis* (twelfth century), Darius becomes an “increasingly sympathetic figure,” ending up as “a model king” before his death (Lafferty 2011: pp. 198–199). This mirrors Darius’ character development in Curtius Rufus’ *Historiae*, skillfully used as a literary device in order to highlight Alexander’s gradual moral decline. However, Walter of Châtillon’s *Alexandreis* as a highly complex work also reflects its contemporary cultural and political background. As in the times of the crusades, Alexander became a role model for European princes engaged in the campaigns (Buschinger 2011: pp. 302–303), Châtillon’s ambiguously portrayed Macedonian ruler is typologically styled as a crusader king. In addition, emphasized by allusions to the *Book of Daniel*, he is represented as a divine tool by which the transition of the Persian Empire to that of the Macedonian is accomplished (Lafferty 2011: p. 199). Rudolf of Ems (thirteenth century) uses Alexander to write a mirror of princes placing his protagonist in salvation history and universal history (Buschinger 2011: p. 301). The German *Song of Alexander* (twelfth century) of Lamprecht or Vorau emphasizes Alexander’s role as a liberator and fighter for justice by changing the “happy ending” of the reconciliation between Alexander and Darius in the Greek *Alexander Romance*: Alexander gets rid of the unjust tribute imposed by the Persians by killing his opponent by cutting off his head (Buschinger 2011: pp. 292–293).

In consequence, there emerged various perceptions of Alexander and Darius as distorted protagonists in the context of the European reception under the

influence of the Greek *Alexander Romance*. For example, Achaemenid Persia could be depicted as predecessor of the Macedonian Empire, as a decorative setting for Alexander's adventures in search of marvels and treasures, as an ideologically and politically colored forerunner of the eastern enemy of Europeans, or as Alexander's stumbling block regarding his character development when he allegedly fell victim to "eastern vices." Darius could be portrayed as a tyrant who demanded an unjust tribute from the Macedonians, as a decadent eastern monarch, or, under the influence of Curtius Rufus, as a former modest and good person corrupted by power but chastened by the setbacks. It depended on the individual texts and authors with their own backgrounds and intentions.

Cast into the Role of the Enemy

The multifaceted reception of the Achaemenid Empire included without limitation the parallel of the ancient Persians with contemporary opponents from eastern countries. This was not only the case in the times of the crusades but also during the wars against the Ottoman Empire in early modern times. Hence, the image of Persians in Late Byzantine *Alexander Romances* composed at a time when the Ottomans posed a severe threat to the Byzantine Empire was associated with the contemporary Turks (Jouanno 2012). The Turkish menace is also reflected in western depictions of Alexander fighting against the Persians, such as Albrecht Altdorfer's *Alexanderschlacht* (1528–1529), commissioned by the Bavarian duke Wilhelm IV. While the scene is identified as the battle of Issus, the ancient event is transferred to a dimension of universal history and stylized as a war between East and West (Noll 2005: pp. 29–31). The contemporary coloring is also provided by the clothing of the Persians and the tents of Darius' camp reflecting Turkish tents of Altdorfer's time (Noll 2005: p. 30). An earlier example of associating the Turks with the ancient Persians and Alexander with their European opponent is provided by Andrea del Verrocchio's lost bronze reliefs of Alexander and Darius III (Caglioti 2011). According to Giorgio Vasari, these artworks were commissioned by Lorenzo de Medici in about 1480 CE as gifts for Matthias I Corvinus of Hungary (Vasari III: p. 361). The message is evident: the Hungarian king was engaged in fights against the Turks and is said to have been compared to Alexander by his contemporaries (Hadjinicolaou 1997: p. 18). Thus, while campaigning against the Turks evoked the association with Alexander, the Achaemenid protagonist received attention as well (Lodge 1990). Defeating an illustrious enemy served to highlight the victory. The legend of Alexander as the conqueror of Achaemenid Persia also offered the chance to allude to the virtues of clemency, modesty, and magnanimity in victory. In this context,

Darius' mother, Sisygambis, and his (sister?-)wife, Stateira, received special attention. The unhistorical scene of Alexander's visit to the tent of the Achaemenid family taken captive after the battle of Issus when he generously forgave Sisygambis' mistake when she did obeisance to his companion Hephaestion (Curt. 3.12.12–17; Arr. *an.* 2.12.7–8; Diod. 17.37.5–6; Val. Max. 4.7.ext.2A) became a popular subject in European art, for example represented by Giovanni Antonio Bazzi (in about 1516 CE), Paolo Veronese (in about 1570 CE) or Charles LeBrun (1661/62 CE), the *premier peintre du Roi*, Louis XIV (Müller 2011: pp. 125–127; Noll 2005: pp. 19–20, 32) who chose Alexander as his heroic role model (Schmitter 2002: pp. 420–421). The Achaemenid women only served as foils for a demonstration of the example of Alexander's greatness of heart, clemency, and self-control, making him a noble model to follow. He was clearly the center of attention.

Similarly, references to the Persian Wars of the fifth century BCE, especially to Xerxes' Greek campaign, often focused mainly on the Greek side. In such a context, the Persians were predominantly used as counterimages of their Greek opponents, who were styled as representatives of freedom, democracy, progress, and fitness for war. Hence, the Persians represented symbols of tyranny, despotism, backwardness, and slackness. Reduced to mere schematic stereotypes or metaphors, scenes from ancient Persian history served to explain, legitimize, or justify contemporary issues. For example, Wilhelm von Kaulbach's monumental painting *The Battle of Salamis* (1868), commissioned by Max II of Bavaria for the Maximilianeum and forming part of a series of main events of world history with an educational intention, expresses the triumph of Greek culture. In Jacques-Louis David's *Leonidas aux Thermopyles* (1814), showing the Spartan king before the battle, the Persian invaders are missing. It is just the idea of them, the constructed knowledge in the European cultural memory of the outcome of the battle and its symbolism, that come to the mind of the audience perceiving Leonidas as a courageous patriot (Albertz 2006: pp. 124–134).

Persian Great Kings as exempla

A key factor of the European reception of ancient Persian kings was their being used as moral examples, both in secular and sacral Christianized contexts. However, a political and a religious symbolism were not mutually exclusive but could go together well. As a literary or rhetorical device, in medieval and early modern times in general, *exempla* citing matters from the past served to underline an argument, support standpoints, and emphasize moral or salutary lessons (van der Velden 1995a: pp. 9–10). The predecessors of the Achaemenids in Persia, the Teispids, formed an additional part of the European memory of

ancient Persia and even surpassed the fame of the Achaemenids. Especially Cyrus II, the founder of the Persian Empire, remained an ancient celebrity in the collective memory. In the early fifteenth century CE, based on the reception of the *Cyrupaedia* by the humanists, Cyrus became a role model regarding his military, political, and moral conduct for Renaissance rulers and nobles (Dunn 1995: pp. 373–374). As the *Cyrupaedia* was one of the most popular ancient sources up to the eighteenth century (Wiesehöfer 2005: pp. 73–74, 80), its impact on the European image of Cyrus was of special importance. So Cyrus' gallant and moderate treatment of his beautiful captive Panthea (Xen. Cyr. 4.6.11; 5.1.2–8; 6.1.41; 7.3.13–16) made him an *exemplum virtutis* depicted for example in the painting *Panthea, Cyrus, and Araspas* (1631–1634) by the French artist Laurent de La Hyre, or praised by the German poet Christoph Martin Wieland in *Araspes and Panthea* (1758). At the end of the seventeenth century, John Banks wrote *Cyrus the Great*, deriving from Xenophon's *Cyrupaedia* which had been translated into English (and into French) during the sixteenth century. In 1728, Andrew Michael Ramsay wrote his own "new *Cyrupaedia*" titled *The Travels of Cyrus*, a bestselling work in which he invented further voyages of his protagonist and described his encounters with the prophet Daniel and with Zoroaster (Stoneman 2015: pp. 219–220).

Also, the legend about Cyrus being exposed as a baby, raised by a shepherd, apparent as a natural born ruler in his childhood and recognized by his grandfather, the Median king Astyages (who originally wanted to see him dead as he feared his future rivalry), described by Herodotus (1.107–119) and Trogus-Justin (1.4–5) was present in the European collective memory. For example, scenes from this narrative were depicted by Sebastiano Ricci at the beginning of the eighteenth century or by Jan Victors from Amsterdam, a student of Rembrandt, who painted *The young Cyrus before the throne of his grandfather Astyages* about 1640–1645 (Figure 100.1). He chose the moment when Cyrus was called to Astyages after he had played king with his friends in the village and beaten the son of a traveler who had complained to Astyages (Hdt. 1.114–116; Just. 1.5.1–5). As a symbol of predestined and God-ordained ideal rule, the painting may have been commissioned for one of the residences of the House of Orange (Miller 1993: pp. 548–553). It is suggested that the subject was also intended to underline the claim of the liberation of the Dutch Netherlands from Spain (Hartje-Grave 2009).

However, Cyrus' reception was ambiguous as Herodotus' reflective description of his bitter end also played an important role (Wiesehöfer 2005: pp. 79–80). Even more commonly than scenes from his childhood legend, Cyrus' death as a hubristic invader killed in the battle against the nomadic Massagetae (Hdt. 1.201–214) was a popular theme. In particular his counterpart, the queen of the Massagetae and tragic warrior, Tomyris, who took



Figure 100.1 Oldenburg, Landesmuseum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte 15.651: Jan Victors, *The young Cyrus before the throne of his grandfather Astyages* (1640–1645). Source: Photo S. Adelaide; reproduced by permission of Landesmuseum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte Oldenburg, Galerie Alter Meister.

vengeance upon Cyrus' decapitated corpse for his cruel bloodthirstiness by shoving his head into a wineskin filled with human blood (Hdt. 1.214.3–5), was prominent in the European collective memory. She was introduced into a Christian context as a religious allegory in the *Speculum humanae salvationis*, the “Mirror of Human Salvation” (fourteenth century), which paralleled New Testament or Christian incidents in three prefigurations from the past. Typologically grouped with Judith killing Holofernes and Jael murdering Sisera to release Israel from Canaanite rule, Tomyris with the head of the decapitated Cyrus labeled as “the most cruel murderer” appears as a prefiguration of the Virgin Mary's victory over the devil (Dunn 1995: p. 376; Berger 1979: pp. 6–7). Thus, her act of vengeance was sanctified as a just retribution. She saved her country and avenged the death of her son. Herodotus did not report explicitly that she killed Cyrus or cut the corpse's head off. However, in the text of the *Speculum* as well as in most of the depictions, she is portrayed as the avenger and executioner in order to enforce the resemblance to the role model of Judith. As a symbol of heroic strength, just retribution, and the fight for freedom, in the fourteenth century Tomyris was incorporated along with other powerful women of deed according to the

image of the *virago* (Franke 1997: p. 29), such as Semiramis or Penthesilea into the Nine Female Worthies (*neuf preuses*), the female counterparts of the Nine Male Worthies (*neuf preux*) (Berger 1979: p. 29). Styled as an allegory, while she could be depicted with elements hinting at an eastern setting (for example, the headdress of a turban), it was no rule to emphasize her Asian origin visually. For example, Andrea dal Castagno's fresco of *Famous men and women* (about 1448) for the Villa Carducci near Florence shows her as a blonde-haired warrior holding a lance. She is paired with Queen Esther styled as a liberator of her people (Sachs et al. 1994: p. 122) and the Cumaean Sibyl as a symbol of the adventure of Christ. The inscription presents Tomyris as one who "avenged herself of her son and liberated her country" (Berger 1979: p. 22). Thus, she joined her two fellow heroines as another salvation-promissory woman eliminating representatives of evil, hence becoming a mirror for Christian ideas (Dunn 1995: pp. 376–379). In this context of reception, Cyrus played the role of the prefiguration of the devil, associated with tyranny, cruelty, bloodlust, imperial greed, and suppression. Depictions of the victorious Tomyris with Cyrus' head continued to be created in the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries. A famous example is the painting designed by Rubens, dating from about 1622/23 and probably commissioned by the Infanta Isabella Clara Eugenia, governor of the Spanish Netherlands (Berger 1979: pp. 10–20). Hence, the figure of Tomyris overcoming Cyrus became also an allegory of female ruling power symbolic of the virtues of the patron. Literarily, the moralizing story of the Queen's triumph over the cruel tyrant-invader was mentioned by Boccaccio in his *De mulieribus claris* and *De casibus virorum illustrium*, and by Christine de Pisan in her *Epitre d'Othéa* and *Livre de la Cité des Dames* (Franke 1997: pp. 29–30). Hence, embodying a complex pattern of association, Tomyris fighting Cyrus prefigured Mary against the devil and was a useful projection surface regarding representations of justice, strong, ideal rule, good versus evil, virtues versus vices. Her fame persisted. In 1717 the opera *Die Großmütige Tomyris* by Reinhard Keiser (with a libretto by Johann Joachim Hoë) was performed first in Hamburg. The figure of Tomyris was then incorporated in a secular romanticized context as the opera was concerned with her love life after her return from the victorious fight against Cyrus.

Another scene originating from Herodotus and appearing in European art as a useful *exemplum iustitiae* (van der Velden 1995b: p. 62) was the story about Cambyses II and the corrupt judge Sisamnes, whom the king had executed and flayed because he had been bribed to give an unjust judgment (van Miegroet 1988: p. 117). As a warning, the seat of judgment was covered with Sisamnes' skin cut into strips, reminding his son Otanes appointed as his successor to be just and honest, avoiding corruption (Hdt. 5.25). While in the ancient and modern reception, Herodotus' story was erroneously generalized

resulting in the *topos* that flaying (even alive) was a customary punishment in ancient Persia (Rollinger and Wiesehöfer 2012: pp. 500–502; Rollinger 2010: p. 593; Jacobs 2009: pp. 140–141), Cambyses' attitude toward the corrupt judge was also perceived as a role model of the just ruler. Hence, in the *Gesta Romanorum*, a medieval compilation of moral stories, a version of the episode occurred that was meant to be a reminder of the imperial law to judge justly and punish the transgression of law (van Miegroet 1988: pp. 117, 133). Due to this moral interpretation, the episode became a subject in the iconography of decoration of judges' chambers and town halls. A famous example is Gerard David's *The Judgment of Cambyses* diptych completed in 1498 for the aldermen's chamber in Bruges' town hall where law was administered. As a scene of justice, it was meant to be a moral warning to judges against the temptation of corruption (van der Velden 1995a: pp. 16–39; 1995b: p. 62).

Persian Kings in the Bible

Cyrus' fame was also based on his positive biblical reception as the liberator of the people of Judaea from Babylonian captivity, generous patron of the rebuilding of the temple of Jerusalem, and thus God's divine instrument (Jacobs 2009: p. 148; Wiesehöfer 2005: pp. 74, 81; Briant 1996: p. 51; Ackroyd 1990: pp. 2–4). Alternatively, in biblical illustrations, the Jewish priest Ezra is depicted inspecting the building of the temple together with King Darius or Ezra together with King Artaxerxes (Sachs et al. 1994: p. 122). In any case, the Bible and the apocrypha provided another setting for the European reception of Persian kings, offering additional scenes as thematic foils. Thus, for example, the apocryphal story of the *Book of Daniel* in which Cyrus confronts his confidant Daniel with the question as to why he does not worship the god Bel is depicted by Rembrandt in his *Daniel and Cyrus before the Idol Bel* (1633). Cyrus is lavishly clothed, shimmering in gold and wearing a golden turban, thus reflecting the images of the splendid, luxurious riches of Persia especially prominent in the art of the Netherlands in the seventeenth century (Sachs et al. 1994: p. 122). Turbans in particular were “important guides (...) for dating” (Ingrams 1974: p. 190).

A prominent Persian king in the European cultural memory originating from the Bible was Ahasuerus, either identified with Xerxes or with Artaxerxes I (Littman 1975: p. 145, n. 2, 148). In the *Book of Daniel* (9.1), Ahasuerus is mentioned as the father of Darius the Mede, king of Babylonia, whose identity is also a matter of controversy (Gerstenberger 2005: p. 30; Frye 1994). In the *Book of Esther*, Ahasuerus is a Persian king who celebrated a lavish feast to show his riches (Esth. 1.3). In consequence, he became an example of princely *magnificentia* and his wedding to Esther a role model of splendid courtly

marriages (Franke 1997: p. 29). Especially in the Netherlands in the seventeenth century, Ahasuerus' and Esther's banquets were popular subjects offering the chance to depict lavish feasting scenes influenced by traditional images of Persian gold and luxury (Sachs et al. 1994: p. 122). Another point of reference in the European memory was the scene in which Esther addressed Ahasuerus pleading for her people. As in the case of Daniel and Cyrus, the Persian king did not play the leading role but served as the support act of the biblical protagonist, Esther, who in this scene became a symbol of justice (Franke 1997: p. 38) "analogous to Christ's redemptory *ostentation vulnerum*" (Dunn 1995: p. 375).

In sum, the biblical references to Persian kings had a great impact on European art. Another interesting example is a fresco in the second arcade of the walls and vault of the cloister of Bressanone from the fifteenth century. It depicts a scene from the first *Book of Esdras* (4.29–30) in which Apame, King Darius' concubine, sitting at his right, takes his crown, puts it on her own head and slaps him (de Troyer 2015). The depiction in Bressanone is interpreted as a prefiguration of the humiliation of Christ, even as the version of a "Bisotun Cristiana" showing the royal son of God in an Eastern disguise (Basello 2004: pp. 429–430).

Excitement for the Ancient Persian Empire

Genuine interest as well as superficial excitement about Persian sites and imaginations of Persian splendor also formed part of the variety of European ways of perception. While there had been contact in the centuries before, with the rise in the presence of European travelers in the east starting in the sixteenth century and booming in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, motivated by different reasons such as economy, antiquarian interest, escapist fascination, or curiosity leading to an amount of travel literature, the European information on Persia increased (Ooghe 2007: pp. 233–234, 247). This resulted in a new receptivity for ancient Persia and its reactivation in the cultural and artistic products and discourses. For example, it is suggested that painters such as Rubens based some of their depictions of Persian elements in their artworks on genuine artifacts from Persia introduced into Europe through diplomatic channels and the experiences of travelers (Ingrams 1974: pp. 193–194).

However, the new input from Persia did not affect the central role of Greece in the European cultural memory (Haynes 2000: p. 140). Starting in the late eighteenth century, gradually, diversionary tourist writing of European travelers in the east became distinguished from the accounts of scholars and scientific explorers such as Carsten Niebuhr with his cartographic and discursive studies

of the land and its sights (Ooghe 2007: p. 248; Erker-Sonnabend 1987: pp. 51–86, 98–118). In the nineteenth century, known as the “Age of Excavation,” the exploration of Persia’s ancient history became the field of specialists (Ooghe 2007: pp. 231, 246, 250–251).

As for the perceptions of travelers, again there was no single monolithic attitude but a multiple variety. There was genuine interest in ancient Persia as an object in its own right in different dimensions motivated by manifold reasons. Often, the traditional perceptions of Persia embodied in a widely accepted repertory of stereotype associations serving as a projection of cultural identities continued to play a role. Thus, the travelers tried to identify elements from biblical or ancient sources within the land (Ooghe 2007: p. 237), aimed at encountering their image of the sheer “Orient” (Said 1994), or used Persia as a distorted mirror in which they asserted their respective identities (Erker-Sonnabend 1987: pp. 40, 160–184).

In any case, the experiences and publications of the European travelers in Persia will have stimulated the prevalence of Persian themes in the European drama and opera of the seventeenth and eighteenth century, particularly in Italy. About 270 opera libretti were concerned with Persian topics. One “expert” was the librettist Pietro Metastasio (1698–1782) (Stoneman 2015: pp. 219–220). The themes were fictional stories as well as inspired by historical events, and presumably also partly echoing contemporary political circumstances (Stoneman 2015: pp. 219, 222). A certain flavor of exoticism regarding stage decoration may have been an additional reason. Associated with luxury, treasures, lavish banquets, and fairytale-like amounts of glittering gold in the European imagination, the ancient Persian Empire seems to have provided a spectacular setting. This superficial sort of influence in the opera occurred through the incorporation of some eastern elements, often only a Persian touch that was in vogue. In this context, the phenomenon of the “inner sight,” the dependence on the cultural memory (Nochlin 1989: p. 37), is visible. Even first-hand experience of the historical sites of ancient Persia did not extinguish traditional stereotypes in European cultural products (Harrison 2011: p. 52; Siebenmorgen 2010: p. 13; Erker-Sonnabend 1987: pp. 16, 23). Sometimes, despite autopsy, the clichés sufficed (Haynes 2000: p. 139).

Conclusions

The European receptions and perceptions of the Achaemenid Persian Empire in medieval and modern times were no monolithic closed system reflecting a binary pairing of “East” and “West” but rather complex, multifaceted, and various. Not least because of the wide range of purposes of references to ancient Persia, there existed many different images of ancient Persia, its

inhabitants, land, sights, and royals. While remembering ancient Persia and its protagonists could serve as a mirror reflecting positive as well as negative European preconceptions with diverse implications, there were also traces of genuine interest in Persian history and fascination for its land and sights. On the basis of the reception of ancient sources and biblical references, Persian kings could appear in European cultural products such as art, literature, opera, or drama in multiple forms as examples of either virtue or vice, biblical prefigurations, aristocratic, royal or moral role models, tragic heroes, spectacular decorative elements, foils for contemporary political issues, and thus mirror of eastern opponents like the Turks. However, their depiction was dependent on the intention of the originator. For example, on one hand, Cyrus could be presented as the prefiguration of the devil, on the other hand, as the role model of the just and divinely chosen king.

With the rise in the presence of European travelers in the east in the sixteenth century, the perception of ancient Persia became influenced by their accounts. However, again, the literary and artistic products reflected various perceptions of Persia dependent on the dimension of the author's or artist's references to the established network of associations with Persia in the cultural memory.

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SECTION XII.B

THE LOCAL HERITAGE

CHAPTER 101

Heirs of the Achaemenid Empire: Seleucids, Arsacids, and Sasanians

Andreas Luther

As of 334 BCE, the Achaemenid Empire had begun to collapse in the wake of Alexander the Great's conquests. From the point of view of modern scholarship – and surely for most contemporaries – the relatively quick death of this state came as something of a “surprise” because Alexander could not take advantage of any kind of pre-existing process of decline or structural crisis (Wiesehöfer 1997: p. 24) to accelerate its demise. The fall of the Achaemenids came so suddenly that the Macedonian invaders quite evidently had to develop a concept for how to control and administer this huge territorial expanse on an ad-hoc basis. Given this context, it is really not surprising that Alexander continued to make use of pre-established structures that he found. But the Achaemenid Empire was not only still very much alive in this pragmatic sense; rather, there were a number of states formed in the Hellenistic era in territories that once belonged to the Achaemenid Empire which continued to preserve the Achaemenid legacy. This occurred, for example, through the more or less conscious perpetuation of traditions or the use of explicit references to the old empire for ideological reasons or propaganda purposes. These two components of the term “legacy” are the focus of this chapter, whereby the structural legacy is examined primarily in relation to the Achaemenid imperial order (the culture of the imperial centers and the exercise of power, kingship, etc.) rather than in terms of local cultures.

The Seleucids

At the end of the fourth century BCE, the lion's share of the former territory of the Achaemenid Empire found itself in the hands of the Diadochus Seleucus. Until the second century BCE, the empire he founded stretched from Asia Minor to central Asia. Given the fact that the Seleucids continued to control the area of Iran until after 140 BCE, there is a strong line of continuity between the Achaemenid Empire and the Seleucid Empire. One of the most striking features of the Seleucid state was its ethnic and cultural heterogeneity; the Seleucid kings had to continually make adjustments to account for local circumstances and – as Mehl (2000: p. 40) put it – take on “different roles.” These heterogeneous structures which ultimately prevented the establishment of a strong, centralized state were, according to Briant (1990), a substantial inheritance from the Achaemenid era. Especially in terms of administration and the exercise of power, the Seleucids essentially continued in the tradition of the Achaemenid rulers. For example, they continued to govern via satraps and actually developed this system even further. Seleucus I made an approach toward the former Achaemenid imperial elites by marrying Apama, the daughter of the Bactrian aristocrat Spitamenes. As prince, Antiochus IV bore the name Mithridates (*Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* 1987: 859), which demonstrates that Iranian family traditions were being consciously followed. In terms of their ways of governing, the Seleucid kings proved to be as flexible as their Achaemenid predecessors: local cults (such as in Babylonia) were generally fostered by the Seleucids, and the same has been documented for the Persian Great Kings (Kuhrt and Sherwin-White 1991). That said, however, the Seleucids cannot be seen as unconditional heirs of the Achaemenids.¹ At the imperial level, the Seleucids primarily legitimized their rule on the basis of their descent from Seleucus I, and therefore their role as successors of Alexander the Great. Moreover, in their power-related propaganda, they did not explicitly refer to the Achaemenid kings (see Livy 34.58.3–4). Whereas the Persian kings were elevated to a sacral status through their titles and their close relationship to the god Auramazda, but not seen as godly beings (Kuhrt 2007: p. 475), the Seleucid kings (and queens) were worshipped as gods during their lifetimes (proof of which exists for Antiochus III). Evidence also attests to the appearance of a cult for the founder of the dynasty in Seleucia Pieria as early as the reign of Antiochus I (App. Syr. 63). Programmatic epithets such as *Theos* (Antiochus II) or (*Theos*) *Epiphanes* (Antiochus IV) symbolized this divine status. Additionally, the Seleucids appeared to be rather uninterested in the old monuments in and around Persepolis; in this regard, they were obviously consciously choosing not to follow in the steps of their Persian predecessors. In short, a programmatic link between the Seleucids and the Achaemenids existed only to a limited extent, although there was indeed a line of continuity – especially

in terms of administration – between the Seleucid kings and the Achaemenids. The adaptation of Iranian elements (the diadem, for example), however, was modeled after the example of Alexander the Great.

The situation was somewhat different in the local principalities temporarily subordinate to the Seleucids that emerged in areas formerly under Persian rule during the Hellenistic era. Here we have to take into consideration the kingdom of Persis, as it was situated in the homeland of the Achaemenids. Furthermore, it was the area where at a later date the Sasanians emerged.

Persis

In the era of Alexander the Great and the early Diadochi period, Persis, the heartland of the Achaemenids, was under the administration of the Macedonian satrap Peucestas, who demonstratively showed respect for the religious traditions of the Achaemenid era (Diod. 19.22.2–3). As of 312 BCE, this area came under the control of Seleucus I. Although Greek-Macedonian settlers had already taken up residence in Persis, as early as the third century BCE a local principality developed around Persepolis; one of the first documented representatives of this dynasty was named Artaxerxes. The members of this dynasty are known primarily for their coins, which were minted in the tradition of the Achaemenid satraps. After the Seleucids were pushed out of Iran in the 140s BCE by the Parthians, the princes of Persis who were now under the rule of the Arsacids began to imitate Parthian coin images.

The princes of the early third century BCE strongly modeled the external presentation of themselves after the Achaemenids. This applied, first of all, to their use of titles. On their coins, they used the official title of *prtrk'* (Frataraka, akin to “bailiff”), which we know was used in Egypt in the Achaemenid era, with the suffix *zy 'lly'* (Frataraka “of the gods” or rather along the lines of Skjærvø (1997: p. 102) “the one [set] ahead [of others] of = by the gods”), and on some of the coins of Prince Oborzoz, the (likewise Achaemenid) title *krny* (κάρανος, a kind of “commander-in-chief”) appears. On the coins of Artaxerxes and Oborzoz (Klose and Müseler 2008: 2/7; 2/11–2/14), the title is also embellished with the element *br prs*, which is to be interpreted, as Skjærvø suggests, as “son of Persian,” which “obviously recalls Darius” “a Persian, son of a Persian” (DNa 13–14). Secondly, there is the iconography of the coins: the Frataraka princes normally wore a head covering in the Achaemenid tradition (a bulging “hood,” cheek flaps down to the chin); only Prince Bagadates had himself depicted wearing a pointed tiara with the cheek flap folded up. On the back of coins minted with Prince Autophradates, one can see a figure with wings above a building;² to the left of the building, the prince is depicted (with *kyrbasia*) raising his right hand and standing next to an arch. The “winged man” reappears in a similar manner in other places, such as on the relief on the facade

of the grave of Darius I in Naqš-e Rostam. It has been interpreted as a symbol for kingly *khvarenah* (Wiesehöfer 1994), the worldly order protected by Ahura Mazda (Skjærvø 1997: p. 103), or for Ahura Mazda himself (Jacobs 1987). The portrayal of the prince, however, is modeled after the style of the Achaemenid Great Kings, such as the image of Darius on the same relief. On the coins of Bagadates, meanwhile, there is the image of an enthroned person which resembles common depictions of Achaemenid kings in its details (scepter, blossom in the left hand). The reverse sides of two of Oborzos' coins show a person clad in the style of the Achaemenid Great Kings with a dagger in the right hand, holding down a defeated Greek-Macedonian soldier while grabbing his hair; this appears to be a direct reference to Oborzos' elimination of 3000 rebellious Seleucid colonists in Persis as recorded in Polyæn. 7.40. The conscious appropriation of motives used in the reliefs of Achaemenid kings can only be explained as part of the claim of the Frataraka princes to be the lawful heirs of the Achaemenid kings. Especially the reverse sides of the Oborzos drachma mentioned above suggest the victory of a king in the Achaemenid tradition over "Greeks"/"Macedonians" – this appears to be an element of propaganda aimed at a revival of the Achaemenid royal tradition which had been brought to an abrupt end by Alexander the Great.³ Thirdly, the names of individual dynasts, such as Artaxerxes and Autophradates, indicate onomastic continuity with the Achaemenid era (see Canepa 2010: p. 568). And lastly, in the wake of Alexander, there was still a conscious effort to make use of the old Achaemenid sites in Persis; new constructions appeared in places such as Persepolis or in Pasargadai (unfortunately, the exact chronology is not clear: Callieri 2007: pp. 132–146).

Clearly, the Frataraka of Persis decidedly adopted Achaemenid ways (Curtis speaks of a "glorification of the past in Persis" (2010: p. 391)). For Oborzos in particular, this was also part of a conscious effort to distance himself from the Seleucids. At the same time, however, the use of titles and the headpieces worn by the Frataraka as seen on their coins indicate that they did not assume the "universal" status of the earlier Great Kings (Wiesehöfer 2010: p. 115).

The Arsacids

Around 238 BCE, the Scythian-Parnian tribal leader Arsaces managed to conquer the former Seleucid satrapy of Parthia, which had become independent under the governor Andragoras around 247 BCE, and set up his own kingdom. His descendants, the Parthian Arsacids, were able to continually enlarge their territory in the second century BCE at the cost of the Seleucids and other rivals: Mithridates I conquered the Iranian highlands in the 140s BCE, and in June/July 141 BCE, the cities of Seleucia on the Tigris and Babylon fell into Parthian hands. Around the beginning of the first century BCE, the

Parthians pushed forward to the Euphrates, which from then on marked the boundary between the Roman and Parthian spheres of influence. Well into the third century BCE, the Parthians controlled a territory that reached from Mesopotamia all the way to central Asia. The Parthians took over many of the Seleucid structures (such as the Hellenistic court hierarchy), even those that had led to the continuance of older local systems of order (such as the division of their territory into satrapies, which could be indirectly traced back to the Achaemenid satrapies, and local principalities which had to recognize the sovereignty of the Parthian king). Other elements, such as the Seleucid military organization in Babylonia, appear to have been adapted to fit the new circumstances.

There are only isolated examples of a link to the Achaemenids to be found in the self-representations of the Arsacid kings. This indicates that the Achaemenids never functioned as the sole ideological frame of reference for the Parthian kingdom. Rather, the founder of the dynasty, Arsaces I, always played an important role for the Arsacids. This can easily be seen in the fact that the Parthian kings usually took on the throne name “Arsaces” (Iust. 41.5.8. Strab. 15.1.36). Nevertheless, there are some indications for referential ties to the Achaemenids. One of these is the use of the title “*King of Kings*” from the end of the second century BCE onward. In 109 BCE, Mithridates II (ca. 125–91 BCE) took on the title “King of Kings” and “Great King of Kings” (on coins: ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ and ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ) and, beginning in 96/5 BCE, he had himself depicted on coins wearing a tiara. According to Olbrycht (2009: p. 165) and others, this was “a peculiar breakthrough in royal ideology in Parthia and the entire East. Mithridates II made a stronger stand than his predecessors as heir and restorer of Achaemenid tradition.” However, it should not be forgotten that the immediate successors of Mithridates II did not bear the title *Great King* (*basileus megas*) and the title *King of Kings* first reappeared in the middle of the first century BCE. Given that the assumption of this “higher-order” title occurred a few decades after the seizure of Mesopotamia, it is nonetheless plausible that a new awareness developed at this time through contact with knowledge about this past that had been preserved in this area (among the numerous Greeks and indigenous Babylonians), which in turn led to the renewal of Achaemenid traditions and the occurrence of a kind of “transformation in the Arsacid ideology” (Hauser 2005: p. 176). It may also have been significant that a Parthian prince sent to Rome in the first century CE bore the name Dareus (Suet. Cal. 19). Yet there is no evidence for Parthian building activity – in contrast to that of the Sasanids – at the old Achaemenid sites around Persepolis (cf. Fowler 2005: pp. 137–141). The monuments of Persis obviously did not function as *lieux de mémoire*, presumably because they were not connected to the ancestry of the ruling Arsacid family.

Apart from such Arsacid sources, there are other hints that the Arsacids drew on the Achaemenid legacy. The problem is that most of this correlative information comes from Roman authors. Not only are the terms Parthian, Median, and Persian used as synonyms by the Augustan poets, but also the Parthian kings are depicted as the successors of the Achaemenid kings (for example, Horace c. 2.2.17). Arrian also suggests there was a link between the Arsacids and the Achaemenids in his *Parthika* (second century CE). According to a fragment of Arrian preserved in Syncellus, the founder of the empire, Arsaces, is said to have been a descendant of the Persian Artaxerxes (Arr. Parth. F1 Rose); the original name of King Artaxerxes II Mnemon, to whom this passage refers, was in fact Arsicas/Oarses (Plut. Art. 1.2). The most important evidence for a political program involving the Achaemenid legacy is provided by Tacitus (Ann. 6.31), who refers to an emissary of Artabanus II who had been sent to the court of the Emperor Tiberius in 35 CE; Artabanus demanded possession of the estates of his former rival Vonones, and with reference to the “old boundaries of Persia and Macedonia,” he threatened to “invade the empire that had once belonged to Cyrus and later Alexander” (*simul veteres Persarum ac Macedonum terminos seque invasurum possessa Cyro et post Alexandro per vaniloquentiam ac minas iaciebat*). Furthermore, there is also a line of tradition, preserved for example by the Persian-Arabian author Tabari, that is indirectly based on Iranian source material. Tabari recounts the beginning of Parthian rule: “Then a man called Ashak, a son of Dārā the Elder, revolted – he was born and raised in Rayy. Assembling a large host, he moved against Antiochus (...)” (the name “Dārā” corresponds to the Greek “Dareios”). He further notes that Ashak was also a descendant of the mythical Kayanids (Tabari, ed. De Goeje, p. 704; 709. Translation by M. Perlman). The historians Tha‘alibi (ed. Zotenberg p. 458–459) and Hamza Isfahani (ed. Gottwaldt p. 42/30), who also mention a connection between the Arsacids and the Kayanids, even note that Arsacid kings aspired to invade Roman territory to extract revenge for the death of Dārā at the hands of Alexander; Tha‘alibi refers here to a king named Afqūr-šāh, who is perhaps to be identified with prince Pacorus, son of King Orodes, who had temporarily seized control of Syria from 41–38 BCE.

Given this evidence and other similar references, some modern scholars tend to suggest that the Parthian kings followed a far-reaching political agenda as the heirs of the Achaemenids, regardless of the question of the historical accuracy of these reports of the lineage of the Arsacids (Dąbrowa 2010: pp. 130–131). However, it is quite difficult to say whether the Roman authors were merely reflecting the Parthians’ own propaganda or rather if what primarily comes through is the tinted perspective of western authors influenced by the knowledge of historical facts. Likewise, the information provided by

later Middle Eastern authors has to be taken with a grain of salt because their works appear to have been shaped by Iranian traditions regarding the Parthian Empire in the Sasanid era that were passed down orally and preserved in the history books of the Muslim period. A written version of the legends – which appear in the later, semi-official “Book of Kings” (*xwadāy-nāmag*) – was first attempted in the fifth century CE (Huyse 2008: p. 151). Admittedly, the facts of the matter are complex: it is by no means completely implausible that the Parthians had access to information about the Achaemenids outside of what was to be found in the Iranian epic tradition. The Greco-Hellenic culture was cultivated in the Greek cities within the Parthian Empire – surely the literature found here had preserved pertinent information on the subject and it is not unlikely that through the close contact now and then between Greeks and Iranians (which is tangible, for example, in Seleucia on the Eulæus/Susa) some of this information was passed along. Furthermore, the Parthian kings of the first century BCE benefited from at least the main elements of a Greek education (Wieschöfer 2000), there was evidently a Greek office within the Parthian court, and it is almost always Greek legends that appear in Parthian coinage. In addition, several Arsacid princes spent time in Rome during the Augustan period (Strab. 16.1.28), where they very well might have learned more about the Achaemenids. There might also have been a flow of information coming in from contacts to Babylonian culture as of 141 BCE (Shayegan 2011: p. 369). But it is impossible to determine just how profound the knowledge of the Achaemenids was at the Parthian royal court.

What can be said with certainty, however, is that the Arsacid kingdom was an amalgamation of different traditions (Wieschöfer 1996). Moreover, if the words of the Parthian emissary were more or less accurately recounted by Tacitus, the Arsacids appear not only to have called upon the legacy of their own ancestors and the Achaemenids but also that of Alexander and his successors. That they made an effort to do the same with the Seleucids can be seen, for example, in the Hellenistic epithets borne by the Arsacid kings, beginning with Mithridates I and Phraates II, or in the fact that they continued to use the Seleucid era for dating official (Greek) documents. After all, as Invernizzi (2011: p. 666) maintains, the receptiveness of the Parthians toward the cultures of the peoples under their rule generated a kind of openness “which is no less significant than that of the Achaemenid programs.”

The Sasanians

The Sasanid family based in Persis founded its own empire around 205/6 CE under Ardašir I, the son of Pābag. In the following years, Ardašir brought the south of Iran under his control, and the Parthian Great King Artabanus met

his death at the battle of Hormizdgan, which took place at the end of April in 224 CE. The Romans also got a first taste of the military aggressiveness of the new dynasty in the 230s CE, and the pressure put on the eastern sides of the Roman Empire increased even more under Ardašīr's successor, Šābuhr I, who led three successful campaigns deep into Syria and Asia Minor (in 243, 253, and 260 CE).

At first, the Sasanid Empire, which had largely inherited the territory of the Parthian Empire and first collapsed under the strain of Muslim conquests, retained the structural particularities of the Parthian Empire. That said, however, a stronger centralization in terms of administration developed early on (for example, in the third century CE, at least some of the dependent principalities were governed by members of the Sasanid family; several Parthian families (such as the Karen or the Suren) appear to have survived the fall of the Parthian Empire unscathed. From the very beginning under Ardašīr I, the Sasanid kingdom was more strongly influenced by Iranian traditions than that of the Arsacids. Quite early on, the Sasanids developed a specific ideology for their kingdom. After the victory over Artabanus, Ardašīr took on the title King of Kings; the king's title was also embellished with special elements intended to clearly demonstrate (i) a connection to the Zoroastrian religion (and therefore divine will as legitimation for their rule), (ii) the claim to rule over the Iranians (therefore connecting with the new notion of an Iranian nation, *Ērānšahr*), and (iii) a line of descent going back to divine forefathers as well as the notion of the king as a "god and man in one," denoting a kingdom with "godly qualities" (Wiesehöfer 1994: p. 221). Furthermore, on coins from later in his reign, Ardašīr calls himself "the Mazda-worshiping god Ardašīr, King of Kings of Ērān who is descended from the gods" (*mazdēsn bay Ardašīr šāhān šāh Ērān, kē čīhr az yazdān*). The elevated status of the king was also illustrated with the lighting of a personal king's fire (as was done by the Achaemenids and the Arsacids). The ancestry of the dynasty played a decisive role in legitimizing its rule. Ardašīr and his son Šābuhr I emphasized their descent from Pābag and his father Sāsān (ŠKZ §§1, 36; ed. Huyse). The authors of the Muslim period who used Sasanid source material also note that Ardašīr was a descendant of Sāsān, but they also trace the genealogy of the Sasanids back to the Kayanid kings of Iranian legend (e.g. Tabari ed. Nöldeke pp. 813–814); a line is also traced to a Dārā, son of Bahman, who was a cousin of Ardašīr on his father's side and with whom Alexander (the Great) started a war (see also *Kārmāmag ī Ardašīr ī Pābagān* §3,19 ed. Grenet: Dārāy; Agathias 2.27.1–4). Tabari and other late authors also knew that Ardašīr wanted to avenge this Dārā and restore the kingdom to what it was before the time of Alexander the Great. These details have led modern scholars to assume that the Sasanids pursued a political program that was linked to that of the Achaemenids. Several Roman authors also appear to follow this line of

thought. Ardašīr appears in Cassius Dio (80.4.1) as follows: “He [Artaxerxes/Ardašīr] accordingly became a source of fear to us; for he was encamped with a large army so as to threaten not only Mesopotamia but also Syria, and he boasted that he would win back everything that the ancient Persians had once held, as far as the Grecian Sea, claiming that all this was his rightful inheritance from his forefathers” (Loeb edition, Translation by E. Cary. See Herodian 6.2.2; 6.4.5; Amm. 17.5.5).

About 30 years ago, however, E. Kettenhofen (1984) emphatically argued that these kinds of statements should be read as *interpretatio romana*, i.e. as the interpretations of contemporary Romans; the Sasanids did not have any detailed information about the Achaemenids available to them; the military activities of the early Sasanids (especially the campaigns of Šābuhr I) speak against the idea of a political program that aimed at reclaiming the territory of the Achaemenid Empire as Šābuhr did not occupy Roman territory but was rather content (with a few exceptions) to make short raids (Kettenhofen 1984. See Kettenhofen 2002; Huyse 2002). Moreover, the inscription of Šābuhr from Naqš-e Rostam also does not seem to indicate that he was pursuing any kind of program based on the Achaemenid succession. Even the Middle Eastern sources that speak of revenge for a Dārā who lost out to Alexander (this appears to be in reference to an Achaemenid king named Darius) are not unproblematic because these references first appear in later sources (from the Muslim period), which may mean that they were first constructed in Late Antiquity. The stories of Dārā and Alexander can be traced back to the Greek Alexander romances that were first translated into Middle Persian in the late Sasanid period (“a foreign substance in the national tradition of Iran”: Schoeler 1998: p. 374). Admittedly, however, it can be assumed that there was a “continuity in cultural traditions,” especially in Persis (Kettenhofen 2002: p. 70). Alongside the tradition of using names from the Achaemenid period (see above), this can also be seen in parallels in the forms of Achaemenid and Sasanid inscriptions and in the preservation of the name Dārā in the religious tradition of the Zoroastrians (Huyse 1990). Furthermore, coins of the princes of Persis (see above) as well as graffiti from the palace of Persepolis dating back to the early Sasanid period or just before indicate that the ruins in and around Persepolis had been a site of reverence for a long time. Pābag was (according to the later tradition) fire priest of the temple of Anahita/Anahid in Staxr who was already worshiped in Persis under the Achaemenid Artaxerxes II. In Naqš-e Rostam, the Sasanids placed their royal reliefs and inscriptions on the Achaemenid monuments (such as the Ka‘be-ye Zardošt) or in their immediate surroundings. All that this evidence really points to, however, is that there was an awareness among the Sasanids of local and religious traditions, not necessarily that they had detailed knowledge about the Achaemenids. Characteristic for Sasanid sources is that the origins of the dynasty – for which

tangible evidence exists as of the point at which the Iranian historical tradition was written down (i.e. since the fifth century CE) – were linked to the mythical Kayanids.

All told, the overall picture is quite differentiated: under the Seleucids, who had taken over a large portion of the territory of the Achaemenid Empire, Achaemenid structures were still very much alive (in terms of administration, for example). Of course, for Seleucus and his successors, the Iranian element did not play a great role in justifying their claim to rule because they saw themselves primarily as the heirs of Alexander the Great. Among local dynasts, the situation was somewhat different. Especially in Persis, traditions from the Achaemenid era had quite evidently survived and memories of this period were consciously kept alive. Beyond the scope of this chapter is the situation in Asia Minor and Armenia. Here traditions from the Achaemenid era had also survived, and this was mostly related to the ancestry of the local dynasties. For example, the Cappadocian dynasty of the Ariarathids traced its lineage back to Cyrus the Elder on the one hand, and to Anaphas, one of the seven Persians who killed the magus Smerdis (Diod. 31.19), on the other. Similarly, Mithridates I Ctistes, the founder of the kingdom of Pontus (c. 300 BCE), was possibly a descendant of the earlier Achaemenid satrap of Phrygia, Ariobarzanes (documented as of 388/7 BCE), or was otherwise related to him. The Mithridatids later claimed (like the Cappadocian kings) to descend from one of the six companions of Darius or from the Achaemenid kings (Diod. 19.40.2. Iust. 38.7. App. Mithr. 9) – both of which are possibly historically accurate (Bosworth and Wheatley 1998). The impression is that the Achaemenid legacy took on a stronger referential role, especially at the end of the second century and into the first century BCE: the Parthian Mithridates II, the Armenian Tigranes II, and Mithridates VI of Pontus all took on the title King of Kings; Antiochus of Commagene immortalized his ancestral line going back to the Achaemenid kings atop the Nemrud Dağı; and the Parthian prince Pacorus perhaps justified his advance into Syria as part of a program to claim the inheritance of the Achaemenids. Quite apparently, the Achaemenids had now come to serve as an even stronger justification for political demands. However, it must be noted that the Achaemenids were not the sole pillar of support used in the royal propaganda of these dynasts. Rather, in the kingdom of Pontus, for example, Alexander the Great or the Macedonians came into play, whereas the spotlight was put on the Seleucids in royal propaganda in Commagene, and, in the Parthian Empire, the focal point was the dynasty's founder Arsaces. In this respect, the Achaemenid legacy was not claimed in its "pure" form. In the Sasanid era, however, the memory of the Achaemenids seems to have faded away, leaving behind only a small echo – for the most part, the mythical Kayanids saw to it that the story of the Achaemenids disappeared out of historical consciousness.

NOTES

- 1 Engels, however, maintains that from its beginnings, the Seleucid state proved to be “a direct heir to the Achaemenid empire”; Engels (2011): p. 22.
- 2 The significance of this is not clear (Haerinck and Overlaet (2008): Feueraltar. Klose and Müsseler (2008): p. 21: Ka‘be-ye Zardošt. See Callieri (2007): p. 123).
- 3 Klose and Müsseler (2008): p. 31. No. 2/1; 2/2. No. 2/16a; 2/16b. No. 2/17; 2/18.

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CHAPTER 102

The Perception in Iran in the Medieval and Modern Era

Jan P. Stronk

Introduction

October 12–16, 1971 (20–24 *Mehr* 1350). The *Šāhanšāh* (Kings' king), Muḥammad Reżā Pahlavī, grandly celebrates the 2500-year anniversary of the Persian monarchy at Persepolis, Pasargadae, and Tehrān. The Cyrus Cylinder was chosen as the symbol for the commemoration and the British Museum loaned it to the Iranian government for the duration of the festivities. The main theme of the commemoration was the centrality of the monarchy within Iran's¹ political system, associating the *Šāhanšāh* with famous monarchs of Persia's past, in particular with Cyrus (Ansari 2007: pp. 218–219). The *Šāhanšāh* looked at “a moment from the national past that could best serve as a model and a slogan for the imperial society he hoped to create. This he found in the Achaemenian Empire of Cyrus the Great, Darius I, Xerxes I, and their descendants, which was, in truth, the first true world empire” (Lincoln 1989: p. 32). However, the *Šāhanšāh*'s empire came to an end in 1979. The people of Iran voted for an Islamic republic, which was proclaimed by Grand Ayatollah Ruḥ-Allāh Khomei'ni on April 1st of that year (12 *Farvādīn* 1358). The *Šāhanšāh* himself died the following year in exile.

September 11, 2010 (20 *Šahrīvar* 1389). The Cyrus Cylinder, still a key piece in the collection of the British Museum, was again on loan for a display to the Iranian public. Originally destined to last three months, the exhibition was ultimately prolonged to seven months, the Cylinder returning in London on April

17, 2011. The exhibition was opened by the then serving president of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mahmūd Ahmadinejād. The opening ceremony appeared as a new strategy of the Iranian government to promote a form of religious nationalism, drawing on Iran's ancient past in a way that had hitherto been highly unusual in the Islamic Republic. After the president, about 1 million people took the opportunity to watch the Cyrus Cylinder during its second stay in Tehrān.

Above mentioned occurrences are two examples in which an heirloom of the Achaemenid Empire played a role in modern Iranian history. The Cyrus Cylinder was found at Babylon in 1879. It was originally inscribed and buried in the foundations of a wall after the capture of Babylon by Cyrus II the Great in 539 BCE and is, therefore, considered to be an essentially Persian document. As regards the message it conveys, discussions are still ongoing. The Cylinder has sometimes (wrongly) been described as the “first charter of human rights” (i.a. by the *Šāhanšāh* and members of his family), but in fact it reflects a long tradition in *Mesopotamia* (my italics, JPS) where kings began their reigns with declarations of reforms (see for a translation of the Cylinder, e.g. Michalowski 2006; see also Wiesehöfer 1999). However, both the 1971 and the 2010–2011 events show that the Cylinder continues to excite people, even though the political circumstances in Iran in between the two occasions it was exhibited in Tehrān changed fundamentally.

Both the administration of the *Šāhanšāh* and that of Ahmadinejād tried to connect with the first grand empire in this region, the Achaemenid Empire. Both fitted therewith in a tradition, as claiming continuity is an ancient practice. That also internal changes made the claim of continuity necessary became clear after Darius I acquired the kingship (see, e.g., the text of the Behistun inscription; cf. also Wiesehöfer 2000: p. 58). However, the idea of continuity looks more complicated after the Arab conquest of Persia, as the conquest implicated more than a mere change of rulers. This conquest took shape between 633 CE/12 AP (see for AP note 1) (or even some years before: Pourshariati 2008: p. 4) and 644 CE/23 AP, a conquest both known as *hamle-ye A'rāb* (the attack of the Arabs) or *zohur-e Islām* (dawn of Islam). The latter term is the politically correct one since the Islamic Revolution of 1979.

Medieval Period

The Time of the Caliphs

The Arab conquest of Persia meant not only the takeover of the state by the Rāshidūn Caliphate, followed by that of the Umayyads and after them the 'Abbasids (see Table 102.1 for a list of Islamic dynasties ruling over [parts of] Persia/Iran), it also meant that a new religion, Islam, now superseded public life all over Persia and that a new script and language, Arabic, were introduced,

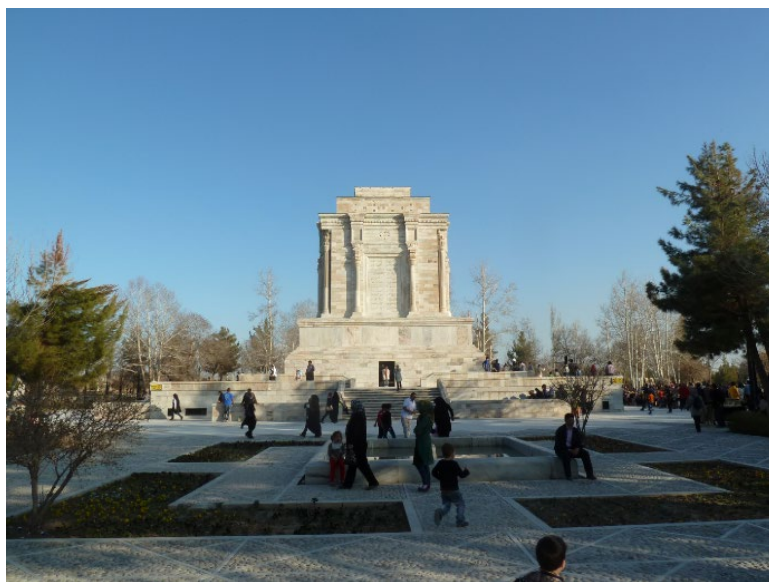


Figure 102.1 Tūs, Mausoleum of Ferdowsi. *Source:* Photo R. Rollinger, reproduced by permission of R. Rollinger.

replacing the Aramaic alphabet that had been used to write Pahlavī – in public affairs, religion, and literary expressions. Gradually Arabic script was somewhat accommodated to facilitate the everyday needs the use of Persian demanded (Persian belonging to the Indo-European languages, whereas Arabic belongs to the Semitic language family). It underlines that Middle Persian, Pahlavī, proved to be quite enduring. Most of its structure and vocabulary survived, evolving into modern Persian, Fārsī. Nevertheless, Persian language and culture publicly went into a decline for several hundred years. During this time, Arabic was the language of study for both religious and secular purposes. Persian merely remained a spoken language, albeit greatly influenced by Arabic (cf. e.g. *Persian Handbook*, sub 1.4).

Though the prospects for Persian at first sight may have looked bleak in the first centuries after the “Dawn of Islam,” the reality appeared more promising. Moreover, partly due to the fact that many people were illiterate, oral traditions – and therefore everyday Pahlavī – remained very much alive (cf. also Rypka 1959: p. 131). In those traditions even some Achaemenid rulers retained a role in people’s awareness, no matter how distorted.² Those very oral traditions ultimately stood at the beginning of two great landmarks of literature in the world, the *Alf Layla wa-Layla* (*The Thousand Nights and One Night*) and the *Šāhnāmeḥ* (*Epic of Kings*), the poem by al-Firdawsī.³ Both works – and others that will be discussed below – display roots that go back at least to the Sāsānian period (cf. also Arberry 1958: pp. 15–16).

Thousand Nights and One Night

There still is much debate regarding many aspects of the *Alf Layla wa-Layla* (see e.g. Irwin 1994: pp. 42–62; Arberry 1958: p. 164). Essentially it is a collection of stories, in Arabic, in which Arab and Persian women figure centrally (Makdisi and Nussbaum 2008: p. 19), mounted into a frame story. Allegedly, the stories had been told by Šehrazade to her husband Šahryār. The construction of the collection is likely to go at least partly back to a Pahlavī example, the *Hazār Afsān* (*A Thousand Tales*). In spite of its Arabic it is, therefore, very much a Persian work.⁴ Right at the beginning of the frame story it is announced, in the translation by Mack (1995: p. 1), that the work recounts “the chronicles of the Susanians, the ancient kings of Persia, who extended their empire into the Indies, over all the islands there unto belonging, a great way beyond the Ganges and as far as China.” Though the introduction might tempt the reader to think here of the Achaemenid kings residing at Susa, the kings intended seemingly are the Sāsānian rulers of Persia (Mack 1995: xii, p. 927). In fact, no recognizable Achaemenid king features in the *Alf Layla wa-Layla*, in spite of assertions that a daughter and/or spouse of Bahman (= Artaxerxes I *Longimanus*) stood at the beginning of the Sasanian dynasty (cf., inter alia, the remarks by Pellat 2011).

To mention this work at all in this chapter might at first sight cause confusion. However, it does serve a purpose. Most of the lore of the past in Persia was transmitted through oral tradition. In the *Alf Layla wa-Layla* we encounter a problem inherent to oral tradition, that a certain amount of contamination is likely to occur, unless, of course, special precautions are observed during the process of transmission. Such precautions, however, are predominantly applied to special categories of texts, notably those with religious importance. Two types of contamination we frequently encounter are telescoping and formulae. Formulae are recurrent themes: the hero is always brave, the lady beautiful and/or in distress, armies well-armed, etc. The formula provides the storyteller with a means both to structure his story and to entice the audience with a familiar sentiment. As the stories are expanded and embellished (also because some poets insert or even invent new additions, another form of contamination), characters from different periods have been placed much closer to each other, causing the effect one may get when looking at them through a telescope: hence this feature is known as telescoping. We meet similar effects in the stories on ancient Persia.

Due to the rate of illiteracy in Persia for many years (cf. Abrahamian 2008: p. 6, table 1), oral information was the key method to transmit knowledge. Oral transmission may create long-living traditions, frequently conveyed by more or less professional storytellers. Even today such storytellers are still active throughout the Near East. We also have evidence that some kings, like the Šafavīd Šāh 'Abbās, employed *qiṣṣa-kwāns* (storytellers) and *Šāhnāme-kwāns*

(reciters of the *Šāhnāmeḥ*) at their court (cf. Browne 1924: p. 110), while 'Abbās' grandfather Ismā'il used itinerant storytellers (*naqqālī*) to spread the word of Shi'ism (cf. e.g. Polk 2009: p. 41). A number of such stories were collected and preserved in works called *Šāhnāmeḥ*. In the words of Meisami: "By the latter half of the 4th/10th century the writing of *Shāhnāmeḥ* had become a growth industry" (Meisami 1999: p. 37; cf. also Morrison 1981: p. 22; Arberry 1958: pp. 41–42). Possibly many of them were compiled on the basis of a, now lost, Sāsānian *kwadāy-Nāmag* (*Book of Lords*; see Yarshater 1983: pp. 359–360; Wiesehöfer 2010: pp. 143–147; Wiesehöfer 2011: pp. 117–118, 123). This book may have been based predominantly on views shaped by Zoroastrianism, in which notably Alexander the Great was viewed negatively (cf. Wiesehöfer 2011: p. 120). The most renowned *Šāhnāmeḥ* was written by an author who has become known as al-Firdawsī (Figure 102.1).

Table 102.1 Most important dynasties ruling over (parts of) Persia/Iran during the medieval and modern periods.

Name of dynasty	Dates CE	Jalālī dates
Rāshidūn Caliphate	634–661	13–40
Umayyad Caliphate	661–750	40–129
'Abbāsīd Caliphate	750–821	129–200
<i>So-called Iranian Intermezzo:</i>		
Šaffārids	861–1002	240–381
Sāmānids	819–999	198–378
Ghaznavids	963–1187	342–566
Būyids	934–1055	313–434
Šeljūqs	1037–1187	416–566
Ghūrīds	1148–1215	527–594
Atābeg (Eldigüzid) and	1136–1225	515–604
Khwārazmshāh <u>interlude</u>	1077–1231	456–610
Ilkhanids (Il-khanids, Mongols)	1231–1335	610–714
<u>Interlude of</u> Jalayerids,	1335–1432	714–811
Injuīds, and	1335–1357	714–736
Mozaffārids	1335–1393	714–772
Timurīds and Turkmen	1370–1506	749–886
Šafāvīds	1502–1736	881–1115
Afšārids	1737–1796	1116–1175
Zand	1751–1794	1130–1173
Qājār	1796–1925	1175–1304
Pahlavī	1925–1979	1304–1358

From 1979/1358 onwards Iran is an Islamic Republic.

The Epic of Kings

The *Šāhnāmeḥ* was written, in Persian, by Abū al-Qāsim Maṣṣūr ben Ḥasan (probably better known as al-Firdawsī [“the Paradisal”: 941/320–1020/399]), in more than 50 000 verse lines of 22 syllables each.⁵ This work relates a more or less cohesive history of (part of: see below) Persia, from the creation of the world down to the Arab conquest. The tale was based upon orally transmitted stories within the *Dihqān*-class (cf. Levy 1977: xvi; Wieschöfer 2010: p. 138 for the background of this class). The epic compiled by al-Firdawsī shows many formulae and the combination of love stories with the elements of heroes’ tales. All these elements underline the oral *origin* (my emphasis, JPS) of the work. Unfortunately, Achaemenid rulers described in the *Šāhnāmeḥ* are, apart from Dārāb and Dārā (Darius III), not really recognizable. Another could be the figure of Bahman ibn Esfandiyār, who might perhaps be equated (on the strength of literary parallels) with Artaxerxes I. This king is said to have married his own daughter, Homāy Čehrzād (“of noble birth”: an equation of her second name with Šehrazade looks feasible), by whom he had a son Dārāb. After Bahman’s death, Homāy Čehrzād succeeded him and reigned during 32 years. Afterwards Dārāb succeeded her and, in his turn, was succeeded as king by his son Dārā.

Al-Firdawsī was born near Ṭūs, a city in the region of Khurāsān, “the dominant scene of the early period of Persian literature” (Morrison 1981: p. 4). Ṭūs belonged to the Sāmānid realm, and it was “under the Samanids that poetry in Persian came to be extensively written and so developed into a cultural force to be reckoned with” (Davis 2006a: xix). The large majority of al-Firdawsī’s sources has disappeared (cf. Wieschöfer 2007: pp. 61–63). Likely these sources were above all oral (cf. also Davis 2006a: xix and note 2; also Rypka 1959: p. 153). Morrison (1981: p. 5), however, maintains they also included a prose version produced by four Zoroastrians. Moreover, the *Šāhnāmeḥ* partly goes back to a version by al-Firdawsī’s predecessor, the poet Daqīqī, who may have been a Zoroastrian as well (Morrison 1981: pp. 21–22).⁶ Daqīqī had started to write a *Šāhnāmeḥ* in verse, but had been murdered around 977/356.

Though al-Firdawsī was a devout Muslim (cf. Davis 2006a: xiv), he may have combined some kind of nationalist sentiment with Shi’i sympathies. The poem displays “forthright hostility toward the Arabs and the political culture, if not the religion, they brought with them” (Davis 2006a: xx). As regards hostility expressed in the *Šāhnāmeḥ*, we may add the Turks to the Arabs (cf. also Browne 1924: p. 13). The nationalism in al-Firdawsī’s work primarily emanates from Khurāsān and Sīstān, i.e. modern eastern Iran and western Afghanistan – the homeland of the Sāmānids. Stories from these regions largely dominate the sections of the *Šāhnāmeḥ* until the arrival of Alexander the Great, de facto obliterating an

overwhelming part of Achaemenid history (cf. Davis 2006a: xx; Wiesehöfer 2011: p. 118). The reign of Alexander the Great should, in my view, here be seen as belonging to the Achaemenids, as his rule was perceived by many as a logical sequel to the kingship of Darius III (cf. e.g. Rypka 1959: p. 484; Wiesehöfer 2000: p. 65). The Shi'i sympathies of al-Firdawsī seem natural, as the vast majority of those living in Persia/Iran and parts of modern Afghanistan and Azerbaijan adhered (and still adhere) to this line in Islam,⁷ though Shi'ism in Persia really took off only after c. 1500/c. 900. The religion the Arabs represented, meanwhile, was the Sunnī version of Islam. It is noteworthy that al-Firdawsī describes two distinct types of kingship. The first is essentially an ancient Middle Eastern type of kingship, tying up kingship with religion and divine sanction, the second rather a secular form of kingship, implying acclamation and sanctioning of the king by his peers (cf. Davis 2006a: xxiii). Both forms are recognizable throughout Persian and Iranian political history until the present day. As it is, when the *Šāhnāmeḥ* was completed, it was not received as a welcome present by the new Ghaznavid rulers (who were of Turkish ethnicity).

With the arrival of Alexander (Sekandar), the poem passes to a more historical content, in spite of several adaptations, one of them being that Alexander is half-Persian (his father being the Persian king Dārāb, though in another passage Sekandar calls himself “the son of Filqus” (= Philippus)), another that he made a pilgrimage to the Ka'bah in Mecca. The latter element was likely caused by the fact that the story of Alexander was actively transmitted in Arabic during the formative period of Islam (Zuwiyya 2001: p. 2). Alexander (= Dū' l-Qarnayn) even features in the Qur'ān (e.g. Sūrah 18: 83–98). Even in translation the duplicity in the *Šāhnāmeḥ* toward Alexander is striking (cf. Davis 2006a: pp. 468–469 vs. 538–539; see also Wiesehöfer 2000: p. 65). Following the story of Alexander, the *Šāhnāmeḥ* relates the story of the Sāsānians. Like most Achaemenids, also the Seleucid kings and the Parthian Empire (in Persian: the Aškāniān) were largely absent in the poem (al-Firdawsī dedicates in all only 20 lines to the Parthians), no doubt partly due to Sāsānian influences (cf. Davis 2006a: xxiv; Meisami 1999: p. 38; Wiesehöfer 2007: pp. 61–63). Through lack of other accessible written sources, the *Šāhnāmeḥ* became the main source of information on ancient Persia for later authors, in spite of its low amount of real historiographical content (cf. Wiesehöfer 2010: p. 141). The *Šāhnāmeḥ* achieved nationalistic importance only in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (cf. Wiesehöfer 2000: p. 73).

From the Šāhnāmeḥ to the Šeljūqs

Both the Achaemenids and Alexander play a minor role in the *Zayn al-Akbār* (*Ornament of the Lord*) by 'Abd al-Ḥayy Gardīzī, who wrote around the middle of the eleventh/fifth century. He criticizes Bahman, equated with Ardašīr

darāz-bāzū (= Artaxerxes I *Longimanus*), “the best of the Persian kings,” for seeking vengeance. As for Alexander: he “devastated Persia, burnt the Zoroastrian books; he had the Persian books of learning translated into Greek, sent the translations to Rūm [= the West; also Byzantium, JPS] and then destroyed the library of Ištākhr [a Sāsānian royal residence, close to Persepolis, JPS], and buried whatever treasures he could not carry off” (Meisami 1999: p. 79). Such negative verdicts were also present in many other works in Pahlavī (cf. Wiesehöfer 2009: pp. 20–21 [inter alia referring to Diod. Sic. 17.70]; Wiesehöfer 2011: pp. 124–128). Nevertheless, “when he died the world was left without a king” (Meisami 1999: p. 79) and chaos reigned until Ardašīr, the founder of the Sāsānian Empire, took control. Throughout the work Gardīzī focuses on what he calls *Irānšahr*, i.e. the country of Iran. Gardīzī describes history as a cyclical process in which dynasties rise or decline, often the consequence of the virtues or defects of individual rulers.

Emphasis on personal qualities is also obvious during the Šeljūq period in the work *Siyar al-Mulūk* (*Rules for Kings*), also known as the *Siyāsat-nāmeḥ* (*Book of Government*), written by Ḥasan ibn 'Alī ibn Ishāq Ṭūsī (c. 1019/398–1092/471). He was the Persian vizier of two Turkish Šeljūq sultans and a staunch Sunnī Muslim. In reward for his services he received the title of *Niẓām al-Mulk* (Order of the Kingdom), by which title he is also known as an author. Of the pre-Islamic Persian past only Alexander is mentioned among the good kings (Niẓām al-Mulk 1978: p. 61 §9; see also Meisami 1999: pp. 145–162), a tradition connected with a much more positive view of Alexander that circulated in Persia from at least Sasanian times as well (cf. Wiesehöfer 2011: pp. 128–131). Regarding Alexander’s victory over Darius, Niẓām al-Mulk remarks: “It is well known how Alexander killed Darius. The reason for this was that Darius’s ‘vazir had secret dealings with Alexander. When Darius was slain, Alexander said, ‘The negligence of the amir and the treachery of the vazir have taken away his kingship’” (Niẓām al-Mulk 1978: p. 31 §25). The sequence is told later: Darius, son of Darius, had two beautiful daughters. After Darius was killed, people tried to convince Alexander to enter Darius’ night quarters, hoping he might marry one of Darius’ daughters. To those people Alexander replied: ‘We vanquished their men; let us not be conquered by their women’” (Niẓām al-Mulk 1978: pp. 181–182 §7). See for Niẓām al-Mulk also Arberry 1958: pp. 74–76.

Slightly later than the work of Niẓām al-Mulk we should date the *Fārs-nāmah* (*Book of Fārs*), written by an anonymous author known as *Ibn al-Balḥī* (Native of Balkh). His is the first elaborate, predominantly geographic, description of Persia we have: it should be dated between c. 1106/485–1116/495 (Le Strange and Nicholson 1921: xi). After a short introduction, the author starts on fol. 3a “with the long line of the early Persian kings, whose history, much in epitome, closes with the last of the Sāsānians and the rise of Islam” (Le

Strange and Nicholson 1921: xi; see also [Persian] 4 line 5–113 line 8). This history does not differ significantly from al-Firdawsī's *Šāhnāmeḥ* (Le Strange and Nicholson 1921: xxiii). One exception is the more elaborate treatment of the reign of Bahman ibn Esfandiyār, Artaxerxes I *Longimanus*. Here we encounter other examples of telescoping. Artaxerxes is credited to have subjugated the west, to have ordered Nebuchadnezzar to destroy Jerusalem, but ultimately sent the Israelites back and restored Jerusalem (Le Strange and Nicholson 1921: pp. 52–53). He had two sons, of whom Dārā ibn Bahman succeeded him. This king, who created a secret service, was in his turn succeeded by Dārā ibn Dārā, in whose reign Persia was conquered by Alexander due to the machinations of Dārā's vizier (Le Strange and Nicholson 1921: pp. 54–56). See for a more detailed account of Ibn al-Balḥī's story Meisami (1999: pp. 162–188, especially 170–171) and Arberry (1958: p. 103).

Alexander also features in an anonymous *Mudjmal at-tawārīkh wa-al-qīṣaṣ* (*Histories and Tales of the World*), compiled around 1126/505. The description of Alexander's reign in this work is a mixture of historical and legendary facts. The editor of a 1939 publication of this work, M.T. Bahār,⁸ shows himself upset by the anonymous author's claim that the Persians liked Alexander because he executed the murderers of Dārā and married his daughter Rawshanak. He asserts that, on the contrary, the Persians never liked Alexander because he is called accursed in all the old Persian books because of his destruction of Persian culture (after Meisami, 1999: p. 193, also 191). Though the anonymous author frequently refers to the *Šāhnāmeḥ* (cf. Najmabadi and Weber 2000: p. 13 and note 5), he rarely quotes from it. It should be noted that he, too, shares Nebuchadnezzar (Bukht Naṣṣar) among the kings of Persian descent, residing in Susa (Najmabadi and Weber 2000: p. 237 [Persian], lines 24–27). In the *Mudjmal* Alexander also appears as the man who built the famous wall against the peoples of Gog and Magog (*Ya ġūġ wa-Ma ġūġ*). Who precisely these peoples are remains in the dark, but they are closely related with eschatological beliefs (see also Chasseur 2008: pp. 279–284). For a more detailed review of the *Mudjmal* see Meisami (1999: pp. 188–209) and Arberry (1958: p. 103).

So far we have encountered several works in which Alexander the Great features. We have also pointed at the strength of oral traditions. Another example is the *Iskandar-nāmeḥ* (*Epic of Alexander*). It was written by Abū Muḥammad Ilyās ben Yūsuf Nizāmī Ganḡawī (best known as Nizāmī or Neẓāmī: 1141/520–1209/588), who was born in a region at present part of Azerbaijan but speaking Persian. The *Iskandar-nāmeḥ* is part of his main work, the *ḥamsa* (the *Five (Treasures)*). The *Iskandar-nāmeḥ* is a story of Alexander the Great in two parts, the first more epic, the other more didactic in character.⁹ The work shows many similarities with the *Šāhnāmeḥ*, but also distinct differences. Here, too, the Persian king Dārā appears next to Iskandar, this time as Iskandar's half-brother. In various manuscripts slightly different

versions occur, but in all versions the conqueror appears as the legitimate successor and ruler of the empire.

The principal episodes of the legend of Alexander, as recited in Muslim tradition, are related in the first part of the *Iskandar-nāmeḥ*, known as the *Šaraf-nāmeḥ* (*Epic of Honor*): the birth of Alexander, succession to the Macedonian throne, a war in Egypt, the war with the Persians, the defeat and death of Dārā, and Alexander's marriage to Dārā's daughter, his pilgrimage to Mecca. Next, Alexander goes to India and China, but during his absence the Rūs [i.e. Vikings from Russia] invade his territory. Consequently Alexander fights the Rūs, a struggle that ends in victory for him. Finally, the *Šaraf-nāmeḥ* mentions Alexander's unsuccessful search for the water of immortal life. In the second part, the *ḥirad-nāmeḥ* or *Eqbāl-nāmeḥ* (respectively *Epic of Wisdom* or *Epic of Fortune*), Alexander is not described as a warrior but as a sage, talking to Greek and Indian philosophers, and a prophet. The work ends with Alexander's death (cf. also the description by Blois 1998).¹⁰

In the centuries after the publication of the *Iskandar-nāmeḥ* most surviving historical works seem to have been primarily aimed to affirm the legitimacy of the rulers and the Achaemenid kings are not recognizably described (see also Szuppe 2003).¹¹ However, some time during the fourteenth/eighth century a work was written by Faḍlu'llāh al-Ḥusaynī. His *Tārik al-mu'jam fi ātār-e mulūk-e 'Ajam* (*History of the Oldest Kings of Persia*) would have a revival during the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth/thirteenth century under the influence of nationalist groups. In itself this work, "a highly rhetorical account of the ancient Kings of Persia down to Sāsānian times" (Browne 1920: p. 68), was of no significant value (see also below under Qajar period).

Modern Period

From the Šafavīds to the Zand Period

Also during the Šafavīd period: "The king remains the point of focus in the narratives and the historians placed him at the core of all discussions. ... In various ways, Safavid historians promoted the king's legitimate right to rule" (Quinn 2003). At the same time Quinn concludes that much of the work of Šafavīd historians is still unexplored. As regards the period following the Šafavīd period, Tucker remarks that:

Persian historical writing in the 18th/12th century reflected the profound changes that occurred in Iran after the 1722/1134 Afghan conquest of Isfahan. ... Afsharid and Zand court histories largely followed Safavid models in their structure and language, but departed from ... historiographical conventions in small but meaningful ways

(Tucker 2004).¹²

Further on Tucker concludes: “The changing styles of 18th-century chronicles signalled the beginning of a systemic transformation in the writing of history in Iran that extended well into the 19th century” (ibidem). They were not the conditions for attention to pre-Islamic occurrences, notably those of the Achaemenid Empire and its end.

Qājār Period

Amanat notices at the beginning of his contribution to the *Encyclopaedia Iranica* on the historiography of this period that: “In the century and a half that constituted the Qajar period (1786–1925), writing of history evolved ... Qajar historiography fused the pre-Islamic memory with Iran’s dynastic history as well as with its Shi’i past” (Amanat 2004a). Its goals and ambitions were, however, hampered by the absence of organized and/or accessible archives as well as the absence of critical academic surroundings. It led Browne (1924: p. 7) to emphatically warn to use “later Persian historians ... with great caution.”

The *Nāma-ye kosravān* (*Story of the Kings*) by Jalāl-al-Din Mirzā¹³ (3 vols., Tehrān 1868/1247–1871/1250) marks a new departure in Persian historiography. It is a history textbook, written in relatively simple Persian. It counts illustrations of the ancient Persian kings, apparently based upon Parthian and Sāsānian coins. In the *Nāma-ye kosravān* Persian dynastic history is discussed from the origin of man to contemporary times. Naturally the *Šahnāme* is among the author’s sources as well as – remarkably – some modern European studies on the Parthian and Sāsānian periods. Jalāl-al-Din Mirzā focuses on the glorious Persian past before the Islamic invasion, displaying definite traits of nationalism. The prince (= *Mirzā*) expresses his idea, that the only way Persia could regain its position in the world is to confess itself to western (= European) values and especially western knowledge.

In several respects the work of Jalāl-al-Din Mirzā links up with that of the fourteenth/eighth-century author Faḍlu’llāh al-Ḥusaynī, whose *Tārik* was, in spite of its limited quality, printed seven times between 1831/1210 and 1891/1270 as well as three times during the early twentieth century/late thirteenth century. His work found support among a group of Persian literati (*‘uqqāl*), developing on the fertile soil created by the encounter of the Persian pre-industrial society with the expanding political, industrial, and military interests of international powers with regard to Persia’s assets. These literati “sought to create a new national identity on the basis of its [viz. Persia’s, JPS] own pre-existing ethnic and territorial ties, historical memories, and commemorations of historical events” (Ashraf 2006). Moreover: “The new literati promoted the modern conceptions of nationalism and Iranian national identity based on the

rich, centuries-old Persian cultural heritage” (ibidem). A prominent figure among this group of literati was the poet, scholar, and artist Mīrzā Muḥammad-Nāṣir Ḥusaynī Širāzī, better known under his pen-name Forṣat-al Dawla (“An opportunity in/of Government”).¹⁴ His best-known work is *āṭār-e 'Ajam* (*Antiquity of Persia*), a collection of more than 50 drawings of various historical sites of Persia, especially Fārs (Bombay: 1935/1314). It is, in effect, a travelogue comprising detailed, first-hand biographical information about the elite of Fārs, sources on the history of the region, as well as its geography.¹⁵

The beginning of the twentieth century CE in Persia was characterized by a number of fundamental developments in society and Persia’s position in global geopolitical relations. One of those developments was the Persian Constitutional Revolution of 1906/1285–1911/1290, which led to the institution of a parliament (*Majles*). The changes in global developments accentuated the increasing interference (real and/or alleged) into Persian matters by Russia and Great Britain, competing with each other in Persia in their “Great Game.” All these developments had their impact on the Persians’ view of the world and their view of Persian history (cf. Polk 2009: pp. 77–85, 94–102; also Katouzian 2009: pp. 15–16).

In this changing world Mīrzā āqā ḥan Kermāni wrote his *ā'ina-ye Sekandari* (*Mirror of Alexander*), a work consisting of three volumes (Tehrān 1909/1288). In volume 1 he pays, inter alia, attention to the pre-Islamic period including the Achaemenid Empire, using both Persian sources and French translations of classical Greek and Latin authors, such as Xenophon, Ctesias, and Herodotus. Kermāni does his utmost to match these sources and the results of the emerging science of archeology with Persian literature as the *Šāhnāmeḥ*, an attempt hardly creating any historical clarity. It did, however, achieve another result. In the words of Amanat, “*ā'ina* demonstrates a new nationalist awareness, passionate, idealistic and politically charged, a prototype for the shaping of the 20th century Iranian identity” (Amanat 2004a). At the beginning of the twentieth century (late thirteenth century) also several translations of works on the international developments and on Persia were published in Fārsī, including Xenophon’s *Cyropaedia* (cf. Amanat 2004a).

Pahlavī Period

Amanat starts his account of the historiography of the Pahlavī period with the observation that:

Histories of ancient, medieval, and modern Iran produced in the Pahlavī period ... contributed to a complex understanding of the past that aimed to demonstrate Iran’s territorial integrity and its cultural and political continuity. ...

Typical of comparable nationalist historiographies in the early part of the 20th century, ..., the state-sponsored historical narrative under the Pahlavīs decidedly favored highlighting the might and glory of the ancient Persian empires, as supported by new archeological and textual evidences

(Amanat 2004b).

Naturally, the Pahlavīs posed as the family responsible for the restoration of Persia to the forefront of developments in the world, irrespective of whether they could substantiate their claims. By adopting the reign name of “Pahlavī,” Reżā Šāh “identified himself with the ancient Persian tradition. He and his son Muḥammad Reza built the image of the regime on Iranian monarchical glories from the time of Cyrus the Great” (Polk 2009: pp. 103–104). The ceremony in 1971/1350 with which we started this survey of Persian/Iranian perception of the Achaemenids seamlessly falls within this line of politics. The same goes for the reaction of the *Šāhanšāh* when being compared with Alexander the Great, an incident described by Wiesehöfer (2011: pp. 131–132).

The new situation fully benefited from developments in archeology in particular and classical studies in general (like the publication of the *Paulys Realencyclopädie classischen Altertums* from 1893 onward), which together gave a better and more comprehensive view of the ancient world, emphatically including the Achaemenid Empire. The first more or less systematically conducted research into ancient Persia was presented by Ḥasan Pīrniyā: *Irān-e bāstāni* (*Ancient Iran*: Tehrān: 1927/1306). In this history he surveyed pre-Islamic Persia up to the end of the Sāsānian period on the basis of Greek and Roman sources. Because of its relative dependency on the *Šāhnāmeḥ* it could be regarded as a product of transition to a different, more methodical, approach to history. Though the *Šāhnāmeḥ* also dominated his second major work, there was again a slight refinement in method. In *Dāstānhā-ye Irān-e qadīm* (*Sagas of Ancient Iran*: Tehrān, 1928/1307), Pīrniyā makes an attempt to distil the western sources not only from the *Šāhnāmeḥ* but also from other traditional accounts. In 1929/1308, a combined volume of *Irān-e bāstāni* and *Dāstānhā-ye Irān-e qadīm* was published in Tehrān under the title *Irān-e qadīm* (*Ancient Iran*). However, Pīrniyā’s greatest achievement was the — publication of the *Tārik-e Irān-e bāstān* (*History of Ancient Iran*), of which three volumes were published in Tehrān between 1931/1310 and 1933/1312. In it, Pīrniyā aims to provide his readers with a full discussion of all available sources of Persia’s pre-Islamic past: when he died he had advanced as far as the Parthian Empire. In these volumes Pīrniyā adopts a multidisciplinary approach, using not only literary sources (the classical ones in translation, regrettably) but also archeological, numismatic, epigraphic, and papyrological ones (see for a more detailed description Amanat 2004b). The work is still very readable

and has been frequently reprinted: to the best of my knowledge a ninth edition was reprinted in Tehrān in 1999/1378.

Also Ḥasan Taqīzādeh should be mentioned. He published extensively on ancient Persian calendars and calendar reforms in Achaemenid Persia. Taqīzādeh argues that an important reform should be dated to the reign of Artaxerxes I, about 441 BCE. Taqīzādeh adds that the reform suggests that large parts of the population in at least south and west Persia adhered to the Zoroastrian religion and that also the Achaemenid state adopted this religion. In Taqīzādeh's opinion this might explain that in Zoroastrian writings, the name of Artaxerxes is mentioned with a certain amount of affection but that Cyrus and Darius I appear nowhere (see e.g. Taqīzādeh, S.H. 1938).

The combination of the discovery of ancient Persia in literary and material cultural heritage and the surge of nationalist feelings may have contributed to the rise of conspiracy theories in Iran, blaming "the Western World" for harming or even obliterating Persia's/Iran's role in world history. One of the authors adhering to such theories is ḡabīḥ-Allāh Behruz. In his introduction to Aṣlān Ḡaffari's *Qeṣṣa-ye Sekandar o Dārā* (*The fable of Alexander and Dārā*), Tehrān, 1964/1343: ii–lxxiv, he virtually accuses "the West" of spreading the lie that Alexander had conquered Persia, defeating Darius III. Instrumental in this process, according to Behruz, had been the Manicheans. Very similar views as regards the role of the West are expressed by Aḥmad Ḥāmi in his *Safar-e jangi-e Iskandar-e Maqduni be Irān wa Hendustān, bozorgtarin doruḡ-e tāriḡ ast* (*Alexander of Macedon's military expedition to Iran and India, the greatest lie in history*), Tehrān: 1975/1354. The subtitle is the best summary of its contents. In spite of the exuberance of these views, they apparently found some fertile soil among (ultra) nationalist groups in Iran in the declining days of the Pahlavī dynasty (see also e.g. Amanat 2004b).

Islamic Republic of Iran

Also in more recent years national pride, including pride over the Achaemenid past and even before, is manifestly present in the works published in Iran. Some examples may suffice. The first is 'Abd al-Ḥusayn Zarrīn Kub, *Ruzgaran: tarīḡ-i Irān az aghaz ta suqut-i saltanat-i Pahlavī* (*Days: A History of Iran from the Beginning(s) until the End of the Kingship of the Pahlavīs*). It is, as the title indicates, a historical study of Persia/Iran from the pre-Islamic period until the end of the Pahlavī Dynasty in 1979/1358 (Tehrān: Intišarat-i Suḡan, 2004/1383). Comparable as regards subject is Ḥasan Narāqī, *Chakidāh-i tarīḡ-i Irān: az kuchi Aryayihā ta payan-i silsilah-i Pahlavī* (*An Essential History of Iran: from the Aryan migrations to the End of the Pahlavī Era*; Tehrān: Našri Aḡtaran, 2004/1383), which offers what the title promises. More specific is

the work of Hūšang Sādiqī, *Kūruš wa-Bābil* (*Cyrus and Babylon*: Tehrān: Negah, 2005/1384), a review of the expeditions by Cyrus II the Great to Babylon and his influence on the city. Of a slightly different order is Igor Michajlovič D'jakonov and Karīm Kišāwarz, *Tarīḡ-e Mad* (*History of Media*: Tehrān: Elme va Farhangi, 2004/1383), a history of the Medes: it is not a Fārsī original but a translation into Fārsī by Kišāwarz from a work in Russian by D'jakonov (*Istorija Midii: ot drevnejšich vremen do konca IV veka do n.e* [*History of Media, from the ancient times to the end of the fourth century BC*], Moskva: Akademia Nauk, 1956). Also Pierre Briant's *Histoire de l'empire perse* (Paris: Fayard, 1996) has been translated into Fārsī by M. Samsār, as *Tārīḡ-i Imperāturi Hakmanēšin* (*Az Kuruš ta Iskandar*) (*History of the Achaemenid Empire (From Cyrus to Alexander)*, Tehrān: Zariān, 1999/1378. In 2007/1386 appeared *Vahdat siyasi va taalmol farhangi dar Šanšāhi Hakmanēši* (*Pouvoir central et polycentrisme culturel dans l'empire achéménide*), a collection of 15 papers by Briant, translated by N. Forughan (Tehrān: Aḡtaran). Rumour has it that there exists, somewhere, a translation into Fārsī of Briant's *Darius dans l'ombre d'Alexandre* (Paris: Fayard, 2003) as well, but, so far I have failed to trace it. Among the recent additions to these translated works, a translation by Feredun Maseji of Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones' *King and Court in Ancient Persia 559 to 331 BCE* (Edinburgh: EUP, 2013) as *Šāh o darbār dar Irān-e Bastān 559 tā 331 ghabl az milād* (Tehrān, 2016/1395) stands out.

In many respects these works connect with both the national pride of many Iranians, shown during the last exhibition of the Cyrus Cylinder, and the display of increasing self-conscience by the Iranian government toward the outside world, posing itself as the major regional power, a true heir of the Achaemenids. Both everyday politics and the attitude of the population – at least in Tehrān – show that after many centuries during which the memory of the Achaemenid Empire had been nearly obliterated, a renewed interest, be it not always with similar causes, in this period is growing still every day. Perhaps even the celebration of Now Ruz at Persepolis by many modern Iranians testifies to a distinct perception of ancient Persia in modern Iran (cf. Wiesehöfer 2009: p. 23).

NOTES

- 1 In this chapter both the names of “Persia” and “Iran” have been used to designate the country. Though there was previous use of the word “Aryans” in Achaemenid inscriptions, the name “Iran” first appears in the Sāsānian era (the inscription of Ardašīr I at Naqš-e Rostam, where he calls himself “*šāh Ērān*” [“King of the Iranians”]; cf. MacKenzie 1998). Internationally it came into use in 1935. Before that time, the country was from the classical world onward predominantly known as “Persia,” as the Greeks had called it (from Pārsa, the dominant region in the country, certainly in antiquity). Generally, “Persia” and “Iran” are used

interchangeably in cultural contexts. However, “Iran” is the name nowadays used officially in political contexts. Following the tradition that is commonly used in western countries, in this chapter I will use “Persia” whenever I discuss the country or its people in a context that pertains to occurrences before 1935 CE/1314 AP. Generally I shall present the reader with both the years CE (unless indicated otherwise all dates are CE) and AP (the Jalālī (or solar Hejri) dates, the current official Iranian calendar), separated from each other by a forward slash.

- 2 A problem also caused by the fact that Achaemenid rulers had done little to be remembered: cf. P. Briant (2009). Also e.g. Wiesehöfer (2002: p. 210).
- 3 In spite of the negative judgment on the work by Browne (1906: p. 142). For a different view: Wiesehöfer (2010: pp. 147–148).
- 4 Cf. Shafī'ī Kadkanī, *Persian Literature from the Time of Jāmī to the Present Day*. In Morrison (1981: p. 198).
- 5 The editions/translations of this work I used here are Levy (1977) and Davis (2006b). For the purpose of this chapter the differences between these editions, though considerable, are insignificant. Both Levy and Davis omit parts of the original in their translations. However, altogether Davis' translation presents a better view of the whole work of al-Firdawsī. For a succinct analysis of the *Šāhnāme* see also Meisami (1999: pp. 38–45); Katouzian (2009: pp. 19–27); Davis (2006b); Lazard 1975: pp. 626–628.
- 6 For Zoroastrian see, e.g. Chapter 84 Zoroastrianism vs. Mazdaism.
- 7 As regards Shi'i Islam, its origins, and beliefs, there exist many works. A large number of them are, in some respect or another, more or less biased. I think that Halm (2004) is a fair, readable, and generally factual introduction for the interested reader.
- 8 Bahār (1939: p. 56). I used the 2000 publication of the *Mudjmal* by Najmabadi and Weber (2000).
- 9 Nizami, *Das Alexanderbuch = Iskandername*, übertragen aus dem Persischen, Nachwort und Anmerkungen von J.C. Bürgel (1991). Zürich: Manesse.
- 10 Blois (1998). Also: Arberry (1958): pp. 122–129; see also Rypka 1968: pp. 582–583.
- 11 Szuppe (2003). Though at places obsolete, Browne (1920): pp. 62–104 is still a good starting point to explore the historiography of these years.
- 12 Tucker uses the Arab (lunar) calendar.
- 13 For Jalāl-al-Din Mirzā see Amanat and Vejdani (2008).
- 14 For Forṣat-al-Dawla see Kasheff, M. (1999).
- 15 For a review of this work see Dabīrsiāqī, M. (2011). Also in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 2.8: 905–906.

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SECTION XII.C

CONTEMPORARY PERCEPTION

CHAPTER 103

Popular Culture and Its Traditions

Wolfgang Kofler and Robert Rollinger

Staging the Achaemenids: Movies, Comics, Opera, Drama, and Propaganda

The cinematic representation of the Achaemenid world, among other genres, is a prime example of how modern reception is determined by avenues of perception and thought already evident in classical antiquity, newly adapted to modern circumstances (Rollinger 2014). Thus, Darius III and the late Persian Empire function primarily as a stage for the military exploits of Alexander the Great (Briant 2003), a view mirrored closely by ancient sources. Thus also, the Persian Wars are portrayed as a background for a supposedly perennial conflict between East and West. In American and European cinematic productions, it is primarily the battles of Thermopylae (“The 300 Spartans,” USA 1962, dir. Rudolph Maté; “300,” USA 2006, dir. Zack Snyder) and Marathon (“La battaglia di Maratona,” Italy 1956, dir. Jacques Tourneur and Mario Bava) that serve as focal points for a larger conflict. Interestingly, the colossal sea battles of this war have not, as of yet, received any attention, though this has changed with the sequel to Zack Snyder’s “300,” released in the spring of 2014 (“300: Rise of an Empire,” dir. Noam Murro). Originally envisioned as based on the figure of the Persian king (the original name for the project was simply “Xerxes”), it was reimaged as a follow-up to the prior movie. But even though as a title “300: Rise of an Empire” may not indicate it, the main focus of the movie was no longer the Spartan Leonidas and the Battle of

Thermopylae but the Athenian Themistocles and his naval strategy against the Persian invasion force.

Although the reception of distinctly classical subjects such as the Persian Wars has dominated cinematic adaptations of Persian material, this was by no means the only field. Other narratives, such as the biblical account of Esther, also take place at the court of the Great King, and with their potential for “sex and crime” are almost ideally suited for cinematic adaption (e.g. “*Ester e il re*,” Italy/USA 1960, dir. Raoul Walsh, starring Joan Collins and Richard Egan; “*One Night with the King*,” USA 2006, dir. Michael O. Sajbel, starring Tiffany Dupont and Luke Goss). It is perhaps surprising that the figure of Cyrus has only once been a central character (“*L’eroe di Babilonia*,” Italy 1963, dir. Siro Marcellini), although he figured prominently in David W. Griffith’s “*Intolerance*” (USA 1916), where he is portrayed as a remarkably sinister character. It should be pointed out that both negative and positive characterization ultimately can be traced back to classical sources.

Somewhat more ubiquitous is the figure of Xerxes. Particularly in the cinematic adaptations already mentioned (“*The 300 Spartans*”; “*300*”), Xerxes stands at the confluence of different traditions, as the symbol of both the greatness and the decline of his empire and as a poster child for a decadent Oriental court wrecked by libidinous affairs and cunning intrigues. There are modern precursors of this view which can be identified as belonging to the sphere of “high” culture, particularly to the genre of baroque opera, in which Xerxes is a prominent character.¹ Probably most famous among these is Georg Friedrich Handel’s “*Serse*” (London 1738), though Handel could draw from numerous earlier examples (e.g. Francesco Cavalli, “*Xerse*,” 1654; Johann Philipp Förtsch, “*Xerxes in Abydos*,” 1689; Giovanni Bononci, “*Xerse*,” 1694). As a representative of Persian imperialism, Xerxes is rivaled only by the fictitious Great King Artaxerxes appearing in more than 40 Italian operatic works, most of them based in part on Metastasio’s libretto “*Artaserse*” of 1729. An English equivalent was produced in 1762 by Thomas Arne (“*Artaxerxes*”). It should be noted here that the operatic title roles of Persian kings were originally portrayed by castrati or, in later times, by female (mezzo-sopran) singers. This undoubtedly will have had a lasting effect on European imaginings of the Persian royal court and its “effeminate” courtiers.

In looking at the larger context of European cultural development, beginning with the French Age of Enlightenment, we may trace the impact of the reception of Alexander the Great. By conquering and transforming the Persian Empire, as this early modern view claimed, Alexander became a founding figure and forerunner of the modern, European-occidental world which identified contemporary Ottomans with their Persian forebears. We may call this view a precursor to Edward Said’s “*Orientalism*,” an “*orientalisme des Lumières*,” centered on the image of a rich, decadent, and subservient East

governed by despotic rulers as reflected, for instance, in the royal court of the Persian Empire. The courts and its courtiers were portrayed as completely isolated from the “real” world, as the empire was thought to be from the currents of the more “modern” (i.e. classical) Greek world (Briant 2012: pp. 513–566).

Views such as these are indicative for a generalized trend. The Persian Wars in particular fired the imaginations of nationalist-minded authors in the nineteenth century but also served as a screen for anti-monarchist agitation. Thus the title “Leonidas,” shared by many contemporary dramas, is an indication of a Greek/Eurocentric view (Franz von Holbein, 1812; Karl von Toussaint, 1822; Giovanni Battista Moreno, 1827; Anton Kasper, 1834; Eduard Erstenberg, 1860). Other plays wear their intense focus on the Battle of Thermopylae on their sleeves, such as those by Charles Hector d’Estaing (1791), John Peter Roberdeau (1792), Wilhelm Blumenhagen (1814), Heinrich Houbon (1907), or Wera Bosshard (1938). Classical Greek drama also influenced modern playwrights such as Percy Bysshe Shelley, whose “Hellas” (1812) placed “The Persians” of Aeschylus in the decidedly modern context of the Greek War of Independence, with Turkish sultan Mahmud standing in for Xerxes. A century later, the infamous Great King served as the subject of Louis Couperus’ novella “Xerxes of de hoogmoed” (“Xerxes or: Pride,” 1919), dealing with the hubris that, allegedly, was part and parcel of Persian kingship. The Esther narrative also lent itself to dramatization, again presenting the Persian ruler as a stereotypical “Oriental,” oscillating between tyrannical cruelty and unbridled emotionality (Ferdinand Ludwig and Friedrich Koenen, “Die Bitte der Königin,” 1883; Georg Engel, “Hadasa,” 1895), which also provided the thematic locale of Giacomo Leopardi’s “Senofonte e Niccolò Machiavello” (part of his “Operette morali,” 1822) and perpetuated a pejorative view of Cyrus the Great. It is primarily isolated episodes from the classical or biblical source traditions that serve as focal points for modern reinterpretations ranging from psychoanalysis (Otto Rank, “Der Mythos von der Geburt des Helden,” 1909) to the political (Halima Xudoyberdiyeva, “Die Sprüche der Tomyris,” 1996).

But Cyrus also figured prominently in modern Iranian reception of antiquity, starting with the celebrations on the occasion of the 2500th anniversary of the Iranian monarchy under Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi in 1971 (Wieber 2019, pp. 266–67). These extravagant celebrations set off a veritable “Cyrus revival,” in the guise of an uncritically positive reimagining of Cyrus that has managed to outlast even the Islamic revolution of 1979. In the ahistorical view typical for this form of reception, Cyrus was refashioned as originator of modern human rights, with the Cyrus Cylinder imagined as a sort of foundational charter of the new world order (Wiesehöfer 1999). But even this recent reception had its roots in nineteenth-century discoveries of Achaemenid

art and history under the late Qajar dynasty, as well as the growing interest of the Persian shah in early European archeological excavations in Iran. Indeed, completely in keeping with this interest in all things Achaemenid, the aforementioned last Iranian emperor, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, chose the famous audience scene from the Apadana in Persepolis as motif for the 100-Rial bank-note (Sarkhosh Curtis 2005: pp. 255–257).

We have, however, not yet witnessed the full potential extent of modern receptions of Achaemenid history. As of late, Persian kings have figured prominently not in their historic guise but as completely ahistorical and decontextualized ciphers for everything and anything exotic and mysterious. Here, too, Xerxes is of particular importance. Characters bearing this name can be found in video games (System Shock 2, 1999), animated films (Aladdin, 1994–1995), and fantasy novels (as the “Titan” Xerxes in the “Legends of Dune” trilogy by Brian Herbert and Kevin J. Anderson, 2002–2004). Xerxes has also served as inspiration for rap albums (“Xerxes the God-King,” by King Gordy, 2010), Punk bands (“Xerxes,” hailing from Louisville, KY), and even football clubs (Xerxes DZB Rotterdam [NL], founded in 1904 as the RFC Xerxes). The latter is all the more remarkable, as Persian kings are usually ignored in the context of turn-of-the-century soccer clubs, which were regularly named after classical heroes (e.g. Ajax Amsterdam and a plethora of other contemporary clubs; cf. Freitag 2013). The culmination of this growing depersonalization can be glimpsed in the Japanese manga “Fullmetal Alchemist” by Hiromu Arakawa (2001–2010), set in the fictional country of Amestris, named after Xerxes’ wife, and which includes a mysterious, far-off place surrounded by desert – called Xerxes.

Achaemenids Between External and Self-Perception

As has been shown, modern views of the ancient Persian Empire are exceedingly diverse and multifaceted, which, as a rule, are based on its place in history as the first world empire. However, these views are often and easily eclipsed by associating the Persian Empire with the “Other,” i.e. the arcane, exotic, and ever-so-slightly repugnant. Inherent in this is its usefulness as a canvas for vastly divergent interpretations and attributions.

These transformations, operating on a semantic level, are interesting also from another perspective. They highlight in almost exemplary fashion an idea frequently accepted in recent discussions on cultural studies – particularly discussions dealing with cultural contacts, i.e. that any external designation is simultaneously reflective of internal designations, of self-perception. Now, it is not surprising that this postulate, which reveals the contiguity of ethnical and cultural constructs, should be confirmed from the point of view of

reception studies, which also deal with aspects of cultural transfers. In the case of reception studies, however, this is done not only from a synchronous perspective, which requires direct contacts between different cultural groups, but also diachronically, showing how external and internal perceptions change over time and thus demonstrating how closely they are connected and eventually become relative.

Another important point needs to be made here. The narratives responsible for our notions of “the Persian” are not only the result of a vague impression of cultural differences. Rather, they stage the very encounters with the Other, wherein these differences are generated in the first place. In other words, our view of Persian culture not only results from our own perspective but rests heavily upon narratives dealing with direct contacts between Persians and Greeks, the latter of which we usually identify with ourselves.

It seems obvious that narratives like these tend to embody modern beliefs and concepts. We shall deal next with four examples from the cinematic genre of history movies that demonstrably mingle notions of past and present, “East” and “West”, “You” and “I.” The choice of motion pictures as a genre was determined by the fact that these particular films allow us to expose the dynamics between external and internal views, between our notions of the Other and our notions of ourselves. These films demonstrate that a change of perception of the Other is always connected to a revision of the perception of oneself.

Two of these films, as mentioned above, deal with the battle of Thermopylae in 480 BCE, which, according to a large part of our historical tradition, pitted 300 Spartans under their king Leonidas against a numerically overwhelming Persian foe led by Xerxes in an attempt to block the latter’s invasion of Greece. Despite Leonidas’ fatal end, Thermopylae quickly assumed a critical importance for the development of a shared Hellenic identity which evolved against the backdrop of a Persian menace. This is not surprising, since the establishment of lieux de mémoire – of which the “hot gates” of Thermopylae are a prime example (cf. Funke 2002; Albertz 2006; Moggi 2007) – always coincides with a strengthening of common identities. In this specific context, however, the events also serve to establish clear delineations between Greeks and Persians: in establishing a Hellenic identity, Thermopylae also generates a specific notion of “Persian-ness.”

Thus, the Persians are depicted as a subservient people incapable (and perhaps unworthy) of maintaining their personal freedom and bowing down to the brutalizing rule of an omnipotent king in Rudolph Maté’s classic Cinemascope epic “The 300 Spartans” (1962). Xerxes’ cruelty is self-evident here, culminating in a famous scene. Angered by the death of his brother, Syros, at the hands of a Spartan reconnaissance patrol, Xerxes orders a general attack on the Greek positions to be made the following morning. In preparation for this attack, he orders the wives of all his soldiers to be slaughtered, so that his troops might fight all

the more valiantly in hopes of new spouses. This scene serves as climax to a process of deindividualization of Maté's Persians, their private happiness sacrificed as irrelevant to the greater good of the collective.

Concurrently, the idealized view of Spartan society in "The 300 Spartans" is entirely commensurate with the one-sided and negative depiction of the Persians (cf. Blanshard and Shahabudin 2011: pp. 112–118), in that decidedly authoritarian Spartan traits (e.g. the treatment of helots) are widely ignored. Also, Sparta's role in bringing about a pan-Hellenic coalition is willfully distorted. The cinematic notion of Lacedaemonians dying with the particular purpose of motivating the remaining Greeks to organize a unified and successful defense of Greece is in no way an accurate representation either of actual historic facts or of the political situation at the beginning of the fifth century BCE. The Spartans, as leaders of the Peloponnesian League, enjoyed predominance over other *poleis* which they were wont to exploit for their own advantage. They had no need of playing the martyrs.

To make sense of Maté's interpretation, we have to consider the contemporary context of filming against the backdrop of the Cold War and the incessant fear-mongering that went with it (Levene 2007: pp. 383–385; Lillo Redonet 2008: pp. 117–121; Wieber 2019, pp. 252–54). As "Westerners" the Spartans had to be depicted as having a clean record and their relationship with other Greek cities, as depicted in the motion picture, may well be interpreted as reflecting contemporary debates about leadership roles in NATO. Just as was the case with the United States in that alliance, to be *primi inter pares* was all the Spartans could aspire to. The depiction of Persians as an aboulitic mass is similarly a reflection of contemporary notions of a communist "collective."

But even taking all this into account, Maté's motion picture is effortlessly outclassed by Zack Snyder's "300" (2006), at least as concerns ideological gray areas. Though it is tempting to see this particular film as a striking example of receptions of the ancient world breaking their way into popular culture, this aspect must not be overly stressed. While it is true that we are dealing here with the cinematic adaptation of a graphic novel, the great success the film enjoyed with the public was mostly limited to the United States. Also, the genre of comics and graphic novels has long since managed to shed its "sub-cultural" connotations, particularly in the case of the work of Frank Miller, which provided the basis for this film and which is widely celebrated for its narrative and artistic finesse, playing as it does, among others, on literary genres and media from antiquity to the present.²

The motion picture, however, may convincingly be considered an expression of everyday culture, dealing less with ancient points of view than serving as starting point for acrimonious debates about its reference to contemporary ideologemes. Indeed, the clear-cut, black-and-white depiction of two ancient cultures was polarizing in the extreme and led to widespread protests. The

film's depiction of Persians as will-less, if colorful, servant masses and of their ruler Xerxes as a flamboyant mixture of Orientalist and fantasy elements, sporting body piercings and drawn as a decadent and effeminate tyrant, even led to official protests lodged by Iran with the United Nations. The equally one-sided – if positive – depiction of Spartan society as patriotic and freedom-loving was also heavily criticized as being an obvious glossing over of American “imperialism” against the background of the recent invasion of Iraq by US forces and the ostentatious presentation of a decidedly manly and unadorned body as ideal was castigated as being obvious in its recourse to quasi-fascist iconography (for the clichés operative in the film and the controversial reactions to it see also Lauwers et al. 2013; Wieber 2019, pp. 255–60).

One more point: in analyzing a motion picture as vehicle for the reception of the ancient world, the director's intentions are sometimes of less importance to us than the presence of spectators who interpret the director's visions in a specific way. It may, however, be of interest to see how Snyder has reacted to the criticism directed at his movie. In categorically refuting the charge of irresponsibly playing with fascist connotations, Snyder instead points toward self-deprecating and ironical traits that, according to him at least, serve to deconstruct both the perception of the Spartans and of the Persians (cf. his interview in von Törne 2007; for moments of irony see, e.g., Wieber 2019, p. 259). If we follow this line of argumentation, we might interpret the film's depiction of a Spartan sense of community and justice as, in reality, evidence of mass delusion, of acquiescence in an only superficially democratic, totalitarian order, thus ascribing similar faults to both Greeks and Persians, as well as to their modern-day successors. Regardless of whether one chooses to believe it, this interpretation may serve as a clear demonstration of how processes of external and internal attributions and reinterpretations cannot be separated from each other, because in order to reinterpret the cultural profiles of Persians and Greek at the core of “300,” one has to develop a revised view of the “East” as well as a critical reassessment of the “West”.

The all-important interplay between the discourses on “West” and “East” is also clearly manifest in the filmic adaptations of the life of Alexander the Great. Here again, ancient sources and historical traditions provide material for a broad spectrum of possible interpretations, ranging from the decidedly pro-Macedonian tradition reaching back to Alexander's court historian Callisthenes to Curtius Rufus' view of Alexander as a ruthless tyrant. From an historical point of view, however, here it is indisputably the “West” that is the aggressor. Interestingly, this has led to a nuanced portrayal of Alexander and his military opponents in recent times, which could very well be explained by some kind of collective guilt felt in the “West.”

This is not to say that the depictions of Alexander in motion pictures originate from anything other than a decidedly western point of view. As far as the

Achaemenid Empire is concerned, it is often portrayed as vaguely “eastern,” though lacking in the kind of focused “Persian-ness” that is in evidence in films dealing with the Persian Wars. This is probably due to the fact that the Persian Empire is but one station in any narrative of Alexander’s life and thus the cinematic view of Persians is contaminated by a generalizing Orientalism and exoticism. A good example of this is Robert Rossen’s “Alexander the Great” (1956). Featuring a young Richard Burton in the titular role, this classic of monumental cinema shows a colorful and exotic retinue at the court of the Persian Great King whose plurality probably far surpasses historical facts. This tendency to subsume an entire empire in the immediate proximity of the king is reinforced by the character of Alexander’s wife, Roxane. Following the traditions of the Alexander romance, Roxane is no longer figured as a Sogdian princess but as a daughter of Darius himself (on Rossen’s use of the Alexander romance see Shahabudin 2010: pp. 100–101 and 109). For Rossen, the Achaemenid royal family stands in *pars pro toto* for the whole realm that it dominated.

But, as indicated above, in general the Persians are depicted in a rather nuanced and layered fashion, notwithstanding their artificial embeddedness in a generally Oriental context. “Alexander The Great” shies away from blatant black-or-white stereotypes and, in sympathizing with his enemies, succeeds in casting some shadow on Alexander’s person and his mission. This is also evident in Oliver Stone’s more recent “Alexander” (2004), which follows the tradition established by Rossen’s work. But Stone’s film is also notable for its pragmatism recourse to modern scholarship. During pre-production, Stone managed to attract a noted expert on Alexander, Robin Lane Fox, to act as historical advisor, for which the enthusiastic scholar-horseman was rewarded not in cash but by being allowed to play a bit part as one of Alexander’s standard-bearers (see Lane Fox 2004: pp. 31–32; Baynham 2009: pp. 295–296). Lane Fox’s influence is palpable throughout the entire motion picture, which resonates with his notion, already developed in his 1973 biography, of an Alexander that is not an aimless adventurer but a young man driven by curiosity and a sense of discovery and with the romantically idealized purpose of succeeding in the cultural union of the lands he conquers.³ This is, of course, a highly problematic view of Alexander and one that has led to some rather harsh criticism of Lane Fox’s work (cf. the critical review by Badian 1976). But more importantly, Stone and, through him, Lane Fox succeeded – possibly without realizing it – in publicizing a development in the study of Alexander the Great that was not well known previously. This particular area of research has, in recent decades, revolutionized scholarship on Alexander by supplementing the traditional Greek and Roman accounts with eastern sources. To clarify: it is not Lane Fox’s conclusions that are indicative of this research but rather his willingness to engage in close scrutiny of both sides. The net result

of this is the depiction of Persians in “Alexander,” which, in spite of severe criticism (cf. Harrison 2010; Llewellyn Jones 2010), is considerably more nuanced than any representation based exclusively on Greek accounts could ever hope to be. Here, a surprisingly unpretentious Darius (impressively portrayed by actor Raz Degan) manages to retain his dignity, even though he must behave as the historic Darius did behave and flee the battlefield of Gaugamela, whose visual representation and iconography Stone bases on the famous Alexander mosaic from Pompeii (reminiscences of this kind of description are already extant in Rossen’s movie, cf. Shahabudin 2010: p. 109). This impression is confirmed by the other Persian characters at the royal court, notably Darius’ oldest daughter, Stateira. Though Alexander’s meeting with her is depicted as happening in a harem, this traditional Orientalist cliché (cf. Llewellyn-Jones 2010) is eclipsed by their adherence to social conventions and the mutual respect evident in their interaction. The only problematic element of this episode is the reaction of Alexander’s Macedonian companions, who neither comprehend nor condone his behavior. This is further evidence of how challenging and changing cultural attributions can be achieved only by questioning one’s own notions of self.

Naturally, as was the case with “300,” “Alexander” was widely seen through the prism of contemporary politics (for the following see Kofler 2006). Though Stone steadfastly denied any such connection (e.g. Stone 2010: p. 337), he could not prevent the second Iraq War from unduly influencing the reception of a motion picture shot mostly in not-so-distant Morocco during the height of the war.⁴ Some analogies come too easily and there are, indeed, parallels: the notion of a war waged between “East” and “West,” between “civilization” and “barbarism,” between “democracy” and “tyranny”; or the simple geographical fact that the Persian Empire encompassed all of modern-day Iraq. There was a noticeable rhetoric of revenge not only in Alexander’s utterances but also in many of the public speeches of George W. Bush, despite the latter’s frequent dismissals of any such notions. Then there was the strange historical coincidence that both campaigns were waged by dutiful sons after abortive attempts by their fathers. All of this most certainly contributed to an actualization of the historical narrative. In addition, one could point to recent scientific publications which compare Alexander’s activities in Afghanistan with those of George W. Bush: “Accounts of that campaign read eerily like news from our day. Alexander, too, acted in the context of a larger Middle East crisis inherited from his father. King Philipp II of Macedonia left his son an unresolved conflict against a major powerhouse based in what is now Iraq” (Holt 2005: p. 10).

One particularly poignant example may suffice to illustrate this further (see also Kofler 2006): On December 14th 2003, photos of the capture of Saddam Hussein circulated around the world.⁵ The unshaven and unkempt appearance

of the Iraqi dictator bears a strong resemblance to the condition of the body of Darius which Alexander discovers after his foe had been murdered by his own retinue, covers with his own coat, and subsequently orders to be interred with all traditional honors. We should be careful not to read too much into this, though, particularly since Stone, himself a staunch liberal Democrat, will hardly have been motivated by a desire to equate Saddam Hussein with Darius III, as this would inevitably necessitate that George W. Bush takes the place of Alexander the Great. But it is certainly permissible to use Stone's motion picture as a starting point for a discussion that includes the distant past as well as the present day, a discussion, speaking in a more scholarly fashion, that should have as its goal the identification of the different semantic levels present in his work which we can detect through the esthetics of reception and its processing.

NOTES

- 1 Due to the fact that cinema and opera share melodramatic elements there are close ties between these genres. This is especially true for love stories such as *Caesar and Cleopatra* ("Caesar and Cleopatra," USA 1945, dir. Gabriel Pascal; "Cleopatra," USA 1963, dir. Joseph L. Mankiewicz), which are related to Handel's opera "Giulio Cesare in Egitto" (1724, Libretto Nicola Francesco Haym).
- 2 Cf. Kofler 2012. In addition to the literary mechanisms discussed in this article, one more deserves to be mentioned. As Frank Miller admitted himself, he was very familiar with Maté's film from his early childhood years. The title of his comic book "300," written as it is in numerals, is clearly to be understood as an allusion. But in shortening the title to a single word there rests an additional pun, seeing that it conforms to the Lacedaimonians' proverbial ascetic and taciturn nature. The message seems clear. It is as if Miller wanted to say: "My comic book is even more Spartan than the film."
- 3 As Stone puts it: "I see Alexander more as an explorer, like many others of such a nature, not quite knowing what's going to come up on the horizon, yet boldly reaching for the new electrical charge of change. [...] I would call him not an imperialist, as present fashion would have it, but rather a 'proto man,' an enlightened monarch naturally in the search of one land, one world – the unity, so to speak of the womb" (Stone 2010: p. 340).
- 4 Stone's *Alexander*, especially the campaign in India, has also been brought into connection with the war in Vietnam. Here too the choice of the film locations is a positive argument in favor of this analogy since some relevant scenes of the film were shot in Thailand (cf. Chaniotis 2008: pp. 194–196).
- 5 For ethical reasons we refrain from showing the images here. They are accessible on the internet at <http://www.shmoop.com/today-in-history/dec-13/saddam-hussein-captured>, and http://www.kleinezeitung.at/politik/aussenpolitik/5139815/Saddam-Hussein_Er-war-ein-gebrochener-Mann (accessed July 12, 2017).

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CHAPTER 104

The Achaemenid Empire and Forgery: Inscriptions

Rüdiger Schmitt

Forgeries of Old Persian cuneiform writing were recognized from the end of the nineteenth century (cf. Weissbach 1896: p. 62 §25). The number of these spurious texts has increased steadily, though slowly. Kent (1953: p. 115b) listed eight and Schmitt (2007) pointed out 26 clear examples of forged inscriptions. The number is increasing further, as we can see from the publication of a silver tablet supposed to be written by Darius' co-conspirator Otanes (Soudavar did not expose this as forgery (2010): pp. 126–127) and of a carpet with an adapted inscription of Xerxes (cf. Schmitt 2011), viz. XPe. (The sigla used here are those of Schmitt 2009.) For the first time a complete collection of those texts with full philological and linguistic commentary is available in Schmitt (2007). What all these texts have in common is that they were written quite recently and mostly with a clear intent to sell these fakes. Yet forged inscriptions of this kind, pretending to represent “ancient” work, already existed in Achaemenid times.

The problems of epigraphic forgeries are the same as with forged or imitated works of crafts and arts. Both owe their existence often only to someone's intention to make money. Concerning works of art of the highest quality, it is sometimes the fact that they are offered on the market that may trigger extreme skepticism. A special case of such unexcavated and therefore suspect archeological findings from Iran (often from the region of Hamadan) are the forgeries of cuneiform inscriptions that have appeared in great number since the 1930s. In many cases it is an original work to which afterwards an inscription has been added in order to make it supposedly more authentic and more

valuable; but quite common and unspectacular tablets are also found with inscriptions simply copied (possibly from some modern book) or modified in some way. The forgers do not necessarily need a thorough knowledge of the Old Persian script and language but at least a certain acquaintance with the relevant scholarly literature and publications – the stonemasons responsible for engraving the genuine texts in antiquity did not possess such knowledge since they were merely copying their text from a draft.

Forged inscriptions are found on quite different objects: on metal, clay, and stone tablets; on weapons of various kinds; on glazed bricks, wooden coffins, and carpets as well as gems and seals. Only a few may be listed here.

A priori suspect of forgery are all inscriptions on which we find characters in an otherwise unattested shape, particularly since the Old Persian cuneiform system is construed rather simply and varying characters are known only to a quite restricted extent. A clear sign of forgery is the irregular, clumsy, or even deformed shape of characters and a wavy up-and-down of the lines. The same is true for inscriptions where a small range of signs is repeated frequently or a text is cobbled together from only a few characters which all appear in one and the same name (viz. that of *d-a-r-y-v-u-š* /Dārayavauš/“Darius”).

Various Tablets

- 1) Gold tablet (supposedly from Hamadan) with 19 lines of an accurately written Old Persian text (Schmitt 2007: pp. 35–39), which altogether is composed of phrases attested in inscriptions of Darius I, either without any change (except for the use of logograms) or with a slight shortening of longer passages. Such shortenings provoked an illogical argument and eventually an ungrammatical sentence; the reason for this seems to have been the forger’s intention to offer something new, without having a good command of Old Persian syntax however.
- 2) Fragmentary silver tablet (purportedly from a predatory excavation) with 24 lines of text and below it an incomplete drawing (showing parts of the typical winged disk). The text is written in a rather careless manner, showing many characters with an additional or an omitted stroke, and obviously copied from right to left (Schmitt 2007: pp. 40–44); it is an amateurish modern copy of D²Ha made by someone with no knowledge of Old Persian script and language and familiar with the Perso-Arabic script.
- 3) Folded gold sheet (said to have been found near Hamadan) with an Old Persian inscription (of 29 lines), which combines several common formulas partly in a striking way and presents a number of remarkable mistakes (Schmitt 2007: pp. 45–50). In contrast to those scholars who formerly regarded this text as a product of the late Achaemenid Old Persian

language (among them also Schmitt 1999: pp. 66–69), in my view it is now to be judged as a modern fake. As a particular feature of the text the praise of Auramazdā is preceded by the usual phrase introducing the king's speech. Furthermore, the piece shows some variation in word order and clichéd phrases added at an exceptional place. Due to various additions the subsequent text became entirely ungrammatical. Apparently, in one case the forger failed to present a grammatically correct sentence because (obviously as a speaker of Farsi) he did not know the finite verbal form required in that special case.

- 4) Sheet metal containing a copy of the 24-line inscription DPd with the same line division (Schmitt 2007: pp. 50–53), based on the printed text of a modern edition. This is confirmed by the fact that an old erroneous reading (which was corrected in the 1960s and therefore disappeared in the later text editions) is still present in this text.
- 5) Several clay tablets from Asia Minor but of unknown provenance with rather faulty copies of DPa and XPe on the obverse and reverse respectively (Schmitt 2007: pp. 54–61). The modern forgery is revealed by the fact that the tablets were not turned upside down when the obverse was completed but were turned over like a modern book.
- 6) Brick tablet with 14 lines of text and several figures raised in relief; the characters show a number of odd features, among them wedges running from right to left (Schmitt 2007: pp. 63–67). Circumstantial evidence makes it probable that the forged text is based on several excerpts of Middle Persian inscriptions (as found in transliterated form in modern editions), which by means of a model syllabary but without any knowledge of its actual usage, were transferred into something pretending to be Old Persian cuneiform.
- 7) Limestone tablet with a two-line text and a drawing carved in the manner of a very old cylinder seal (Schmitt 2007: pp. 67–68). The text clearly is a copy of CMa, made from a book (probably Rich 1839), in which drawings of both this inscription and the original seal impression are found.

Weapons

There are a number of objects (belonging to the complex of the so-called Luristan bronzes), that were originally uninscribed. Inscriptions were added only later in order to lend them more authenticity. The fundamental question as to whether these inscriptions were added in the Achaemenid period or only in modern times has been answered in very different ways by modern scholarship. This group is represented by several bronze daggers and similar weapons (Schmitt 2007: pp. 101–111).

Vessels

- 1) Four silver bowls (of unknown origin) with an Old Persian text mentioning Artaxerxes I on the inner rim. They exhibit some characters of a rather strange shape and a number of grammatical and syntactical mistakes, which recall the late Achaemenid inscriptions (Schmitt 2007: pp. 82–93). They are, however, revealed as modern forgeries by the word *s-i-y-m-m*/*šīyamam*/“silver,” which is a back-translation of Farsi *šīm* (instead of Old Persian *a-r-d-t-i-n-*/*ardataina-*/). The authenticity of these four bowl inscriptions was discussed in detail by Schmitt (2007), who left open the question of the genuineness of the bowls themselves. In the case that the vessels were actually produced in Achaemenid times, the inscriptions were added later to enhance the value of the objects.
- 2) Bronze vessel (purportedly from Luristan), on the bottom of which one can read the word *v-z-r-k*/*vazrka*/“great” twice (in reverse direction). However, since such use without any further title or name is unattested, the inscription must be regarded as a fake, especially since this vessel cannot be demonstrated to originate from a legal excavation (Schmitt 2007: pp. 93–95).
- 3) Egg-shaped silver amphora with a rather strange short Old Persian inscription, in which the King’s title is written first without, then with the relevant logogram; moreover it shows an unparalleled combination of two titles, so that the text hardly can be authentic (Schmitt 2007: pp. 95–96).

Wooden Coffin

A spectacular specimen of forgery is an ensemble of inscriptions on a wooden coffin (of unknown origin) and on two plaques covering the female mummy inside. The inscriptions can be qualified as poor modern forgeries (Schmitt 2007: pp. 71–82). Three minor texts on the gold plaque, on the stone slab, and in the middle section of the coffin’s lid are compiled of attested forms and phrases and recent reconstructions based on New Persian forms; all three of them pretend that the deceased is Xerxes’ daughter Rhodogune, whose name in this Greek form is attested by Ctesias only. The text running around the outside of the coffin’s lid in two lines consists of a longer quotation of Darius’ Bīsūtūn inscription (DB IV 72–76), however in an entirely corrupted guise with a lot of remarkable mistakes. Only a few words are correctly written, even in the passages copied from genuine inscriptions. We not only face the addition

and omission of wedges but a consistent disregard for the spelling rules to be employed for writing an Old Persian text. It seems that the forger, surely being a native speaker of Farsi or Dari, worked with a draft version in his mother tongue, which he transferred into cuneiform script by means of a model syllabary or a list of cuneiform characters.

Gobelin-Like Carpet

A large-size gobelin-like carpet of finest quality of unknown provenance (probably from Kerman) and date (presumably the first half of the twentieth century) offers two large pictorial compositions, which link the histories of the Persian and Jewish peoples and contain a number of clear allusions to Achaemenid Persia (see Schmitt 2011). Apart from a Babylonian cuneiform text cut up into six small segments, which is improperly copied by turning the signs upside down, and several minor inscriptions, there is also a “two-line” text written in Old Persian cuneiform characters. It covers four segments that were wrongly arranged by the copyist. If we arrange the text in the right order and interpret the defectively written characters in the correct manner, the resulting text is entirely identical to Xerxes’ inscription XPe.

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The Achaemenid Empire and Forgery: Material Culture

Ellen Rehm

The problem with small art objects of the Achaemenid period is that in comparison with the geographical extent of the whole Persian Empire, officially excavated finds are exceptionally meager. This applies especially to the heartland and to objects made of expensive materials. Instead, many such objects come from the art market. However, these were not only unearthed during illegal digs but also came to light in commercial excavations sanctioned by the government (Helwing and Rahemipour 2011: pp. 112, 127–128). In addition, there are forgeries from illicit workshops. The celebrations of Iran's seventh millennium and the associated large exhibitions during the 1960s in Europe and the USA stimulated an increased demand for Achaemenid art. For the first time there was a ban on commercial excavations in Iran. In 1979, an additional law was introduced concerning cultural objects by which the state had direct right to possession of items of Iranian culture. Thus numerous objects of unknown origin came into collections throughout the world.

Consequently, this chapter discusses three large groups: first, objects excavated and documented in excavations supervised by scholars; second, artifacts from illegal digs; and third, modern objects. To the first group belong objects found in Pasargadae, Susa, and Persepolis. Besides the architectural remains and decorative reliefs, only relatively few objects of the craft industry can be mentioned. This is true particularly of objects made of precious materials. This means that metal vessels are known only through isolated examples, in the shape of bowls and cups. Hardly any rhyta, particularly spouted amphorae, considered as typical of the Achaemenids, were found in the heartland. It is

true that pieces of typical Achaemenid jewelry were found in Pasargadae and Susa; they have come to light in the satrapies as well as outside the empire. Consequently, we must also consider sites in the various Persian provinces in which Achaemenid art was excavated scientifically. Alongside these artifacts are objects from the art market. Many of them come from so-called “treasures.” Whether in fact this was always the case can never be established. It is common practice for dealers to group their wares together so that the buyer will purchase them as a lot. Equally, objects from illegal excavations are combined with objects of the third group (modern forgeries), in order to increase the number of pieces of a “treasure.” Therefore, skepticism is always necessary regarding dealers’ provenance declarations. To this set belong some artifacts in precious metals, which came onto the market in 1954 and were said to be from “Hamadan.” At present, Hamadan – ancient Ecbatana, formerly the capital city of the Medes – cannot be excavated due to continuing building development in the center. Official excavations have been made only at the edge of the city, which brought to light more recent architecture of an Apadana (Boucharlat 2005: pp. 253–254). The authenticity of objects marked “Hamadan” was doubted, even though in terms of style there was little in the way of proof. However, their perfectly preserved condition seems questionable. “Hamadan” was considered a typical made-up label for objects which often have a remarkable style with apparently archaic Achaemenid elements that is called “Median.” Since as yet, due to lack of information, no unequivocal criteria for Median art can be established, there are no guidelines to make a judgment about these objects. This simply makes it difficult for forgers and archeologists alike. Whereas in earlier publications the imaginary findspot “Hamadan” was given with a question mark after it, more recent publications partly give the impression that the finds come from an official excavation (Bleibtreu in Seipel 2000: pp. 200–203 no. 113–115).

Over the last few decades, the tag “Hamadan” has been superseded by “Kalmakarreh,” a name now used for labeling Iranian objects in the art market (Bleibtreu 1999: p. 3; Henkelman 2003: pp. 214–227; Muhly 2004). It seems to have been a “treasure” containing more than 360 finds, which allegedly were discovered by locals, by chance in 1989, in the Kalmakarreh Cave in Luristan. Most of those made of precious metals were also described as belonging to the “Western Cave Hoard” or “Cave Treasure.” However, further investigation of the cave by the Iranian Antiquities Service resulted in no indication of the metal objects from different periods alleged to have been made there. However, no guarantee is assumed for the unity of the objects. Some objects have their owners’ inscriptions in Elamite – an example is a cup with Neo-Assyrian images, and besides the Elamite inscription “Ampiriš, king of Samati, son of Dabala” is a Neo-Assyrian inscription, mentioning Ashurbanipal: “Palace of Ashurbanipal, [the great king,] the power[ful king], the king of the

world, the king of the land of Assyria, the son of Esarhaddon, the king of the land of Assyria, the son Sennacherib, the king of the land of Assyria.” However, since several details of the illustration are inconsistent, some scholars have considered the vessel to be a forgery (Henkelman 2003: pp. 216–217 with footnote 129). Together with the Elamite inscription mentioned above, Henkelman lists 22 further vessels. In addition, he mentions objects with 16 more owners’ inscriptions, some of which are the same on up to three vessels. For quite a few of the names mentioned in the inscriptions, there are parallels in the texts from the Acropolis in Susa, which can be dated to about 585–539 BCE. The paleography of the “Kalkmakareh inscriptions” also matches this period. Even if at first glance the inscriptions indicate an assured origin in antiquity, forged inscriptions on vessels are known as well. In addition, there is the paleographical classification, which indicates the pre-Achaemenid period, while many of the objects, on the basis of their form, are to be dated to the Persian period. Against this, one could say that the shapes of signs need not necessarily be restricted to a short period. However, in my opinion, we should take into account the unusually high number of 17 very diverse vessels mentioned already, all of which have an inscription of the same person. Besides the Assyrian cup, the inscription is incised in Achaemenid bowls with almond-shaped lobes. While it is true that all this can be explained, still it remains striking that they *need* to be pointed out.

An example of the objects from the “Kalkmakareh Cave” can be given here which is now in the Miho Museum (Seipel 1999: pp. 49–54, no. 18). This object, which must have served as a vessel, is a group of figures, sculpted in the round from over a kilogram of silver. It comprises two upright lions facing each other, standing on a prone bull. Each lion sits with one hind paw on the animal’s body and one forepaw on its leg. While their heads are each turned in a different direction, the animals clasp each other with their forepaws. These are hollow inside and so connect the inside of both lions’ bodies. As one lion has an opening in the back of its head and the other lion has an opening in its mouth, it is possible to pour a liquid into one animal which then flows out of the mouth of the other. The unusually schematic indications of detail follow Achaemenid models, but not entirely successfully, as can be seen from the shape of the face and pelt. One more peculiarity stands out: each lion has six claws instead of five on its forepaws. Furthermore, the hatched shapes of the manes, reminiscent of basketry (e.g. bottom of Marlik-vessels), are conspicuous, as are the stylized shoulders in the shape of large deep grooves, otherwise unknown to me. However, the dynamic composition seems to be particularly suspect. To my knowledge, in the ancient Near East it appears only on reliefs and is unknown in the round – let alone functioning as a rhyton.

If one looks at objects in the Mahboubian Collection, which presumably were found by Mahboubian Senior before 1934,¹ one discovers clear stylistic

parallels. An example is another spouted amphora in the form of a sculpture: the unusual composition shows a prone bull seized from behind by a lion, a theme that appears repeatedly on the reliefs in Persepolis. The image of the outstretched right leg of the bull was also taken from there. The mane and especially the unusual position of the lion's shoulders indicate that it was made in the same workshop as the group of three combatants mentioned above. Taken together, all the figurative vessels from the Mahboubian Collection give the impression of being caprices: a noticeably smooth yet angular arrangement of fantastic and often unknown shapes, that together with motifs and elements of style from known models from various periods, was combined to form new works of art. All objects have more or less parallels among themselves.

To conclude our discussion of the "Kalmakarreh" complex, it is clear that almost all the scholars who have dealt with these objects agree that among these artifacts, there are very many with dubious authenticity.

The problem of uncertain source also applies to objects made of precious metals that come from the satrapies. Most of them came to light in "treasures" or "hoards," which – except for the one from Thrace – reached museums and collections via the art market. They were declared as coming from various sites and today they have supposedly guaranteed indications of where they were found, for example Sinope, Panderma, or Mashouta. To some extent, attempts have been made to convince doubters by reconstructing the route taken by the objects from the place where they were presumably found to their eventual owners.

In this connection, we can also mention the so-called "Lydian treasure" or "Karun Treasure" (Özgen and Öztürk 1996). This label covers some 350 objects said to have been found in graves in Turkey. They were unearthed by tomb robbers, reached the Metropolitan Museum in New York, and were later successfully reclaimed by Turkey. Stylistically, many items, based on comparisons with objects from Sardis, for example, can be assigned to the cultural province of Lydia. However, whether all objects actually come from the tumuli in İkiztepe – said to be the findspot by the grave robbers when arrested but later found to be empty and then in due course scientifically studied – can no longer be understood. Generally, the objects were considered to be ancient (e.g. Muscarella 2000: p. 69). However, among these objects there were some bowls with decorations that indicate them to be modern forgeries. An example of a misunderstood motif is the figurative decoration on a phiale (Özgen and Öztürk 1996: p. 89 no. 35): it depicts a capital and instead of bulls – as in exemplars from Susa or Persepolis – its protomes are caprids. These are crouching on a pedestal in the form of a winged sun, and its uraei reach down into the animals. This combination of both motifs is not only unusual but, more importantly, meaningless. The winged sun, whether to be understood as

a symbol for the sun, the heavens, or as a reference to Ahura Mazda, always formally closes over a representation from above and never serves as a base.

The decoration of two further bowls, presumably from the same complex, is equally questionable (Miller 2007; Rehm 2021). One bowl shows the Persian king as an archer standing on a ring with eagles' heads. While as yet the ring with eagles' heads is an unknown image, the motif of the king as an archer is known from small objects of art and therefore could have reached Anatolia. However, one detail of this motif on the bowl is conspicuous: the king wears typical Achaemenid bangles with a convolution opposite the opening. Bracelets of this type are depicted almost exclusively on life-sized representations, such as the reliefs in glazed brick in Susa, showing the royal bodyguard as archers. Reliefs on brick or stone with motifs from Achaemenid art are unknown in Anatolia; smaller objects such as seals or coins could not portray such a detail because of their reduced size. Certainly, one could conjecture that there were pattern books – now lost – through which knowledge of this detail was also available in the West. However, to my knowledge, this remains the only example so far identified. Miller considered these bowls – precisely because of their “false” ornamentation – to be the products of workshops independent of the court, which manufactured them only for the needs of the indigenous elite.

In the east of the Great Empire, the state of affairs concerning objects in precious metals does not seem very different. It is the place to mention the so-called Oxus Treasure, although we do not know whether the regions of the Oxus formed part of a satrapy (Dalton 1964). The history of its discovery from the end of the nineteenth century is bizarre and its origin from the region of the Oxus was questioned (Muscarella 2003). Apart from one bracelet, which the Victoria and Albert Museum in London acquired, the finds went to the British Museum. The authenticity of objects from this “treasure” was occasionally doubted and whether they all belonged together remains under discussion. This applies particularly to some controversial and disputed finds, today kept in the Miho Museum in Japan (Pichikyan 1997; Miho 2002). They were regarded as a treasure and were also supposed to come from this region. The objects were called “the second part of the Oxus Treasure,” but even if – hypothetically speaking – the objects are ancient and belong together, doubts have been raised due partially to the more recent date of the objects. While some of the objects are to be considered as ancient, others appear to be modern fabrications. A closer examination has yet to be made. Other objects, now in the Miho Museum, also arouse our suspicions. For instance, a lavishly decorated torque, which is combined with a pectoral (New York 1996: pp. 48–49 no. 19), suggests a modern caprice. It is covered with ornamental decoration of various kinds, for example a pattern comprising squares with indented sides and roundels with a figure in a crescent. Both patterns have parallels in the jewelry from the grave of a rich woman in Susa. The small

zigzag pattern used to decorate the torque is found instead on a pair of earrings from the art market and on a pendant from Vani. The motif of the rider placed in the right-hand corner and which also decorates the torque is related to the decoration of *akinakes* (e.g. Čertomlyk, Oxus Treasure). The necklace from the Miho Museum was made using the technique of cloisonné, like those from Susa und Vani. Without being able to go into further detail on this occasion, some comments can be made on the combination of motifs. First, the motif of the “figure in a crescent,” which represents a divine being and as such has a religious connotation, becomes meaningless, because it has been cut through above on the side of the support: only the crescent moon remains. Second, the principal motifs on the support have some peculiar features. Above, the “winged figure” – probably Ahura Mazda, the “Wise Lord,” the chief god of the Achaemenids, or one aspect of this god – is flanked by two geese. On known excavated depictions, basically this symbol hovers over a representation, and so is at the divine and superhuman level. Therefore, the geese, which as yet cannot be connected with a deity or a picture of one – according to our present knowledge of how the Achaemenids viewed and portrayed the world – are not in their correct position. Equally, in the lower frieze, the violent battle scene on horseback – Persians against Scythians – raises questions. Scenes with this theme are unknown in small and large works of art in the Achaemenid heartland, which has yielded absolutely no scenes of war. Instead, this subject appears chiefly on seals that do not belong to the Achaemenid court style and suggest western influences. Thus, on the one hand, on the basis of its technique and several motifs, the necklace shows that it comes from the Persian heartland but appears to have been made in the same workshop as the jewelry from Susa. On the other hand, however, the themes of the pendant show ignorance of the Achaemenid spiritual world and suggest production in the west of the empire. The latter is strengthened by the presence of a Greek inscription with an indication of weight on the reverse. In addition to both these geographical origins, there is Egyptian influence on the shape of the pendant, which is reminiscent of a pectoral. As a whole, doubts remain concerning the authenticity of the object.

All in all, it is clear that it is difficult to substantiate many of the Achaemenid forgeries, as hardly any comparative material is available and static Achaemenid art is easy to copy. Certainly, the magnificence of the Persians, mentioned in known Greek and Roman sources, also triggered the production of such objects in modern times. However, it is remarkable that for no other period of the ancient Near East are there so many objects in precious materials which have no guaranteed provenience and so few that come from assured contexts. Due to the scarcity of excavated pieces, numerous artifacts, today considered as forgeries, feature in the illustrations of many books on the history of art. Unfortunately, as a result they have influenced our conception of Achaemenid art.

For a long period, the topic of “forgery” was not mentioned in dealing with Achaemenid material. This was because only a few scholars were expert enough to prove them to be forgeries. For scholars studying the ancient Near East, but never beyond the fall of the Assyrians, the period was too late. For classical archeologists, the art was too alien. In addition, forgeries were mostly exposed only after several years or several centuries, because in each case they reflect the spirit of the time and pay attention to the tastes and knowledge of their time. That is why inconsistencies emerge only retrospectively.

Calmeyer, an archeologist of the ancient Near East with a classical background, was the first to examine more closely the objects relevant here and make known his misgivings about the objects from Hamadan (Calmeyer 1972–1975). He was followed by Muscarella in 1977 and 1979, who made only a partial list of the finds, without explaining why he considered the objects to be modern. In addition, in his zeal he also included ancient objects in the list, which combined with his polemical style made his articles less than welcome. In his monograph 2000, he adopted the same attitude. There is no doubt that in many cases he was correct, but one would have wished – particularly in order to convince non-specialists as well – a more academically-based explanation and fewer disrespectful judgments and denunciations of colleagues mentioned by name.

Ultimately, the following can be said: we can compare the relevant objects only with larger works of art, which already is certainly not ideal due to the range of genres. Many variations, which could develop on a smaller scale and with other materials, are not found there. It is particularly difficult to classify the objects from the satrapies, as these are regional products and were subject to different rules and influences. In my opinion, there is often no possibility of separating out ancient and modern artifacts. Such products are also found outside the Persian Empire. An example is an amphora with handles from a *kurgan* in Filippovka, in the southern Urals (Aruz et al. 2000: pp. 152–153 no. 93). The unusual double-walled, completely undecorated gold vessel corresponds to the amphorae with a belly and a wide neck, known from the reliefs in Persepolis. The vessel has two handles which – typically Achaemenid – are partially zoomorphic in shape. The handles are formed from two leaping rams, the upper parts of their bodies in the round, while their lower parts are in relief and then turn into a shaft with a round cross-section. At the lower join, the handle ends in naturalistically molded lion’s claws. The bodies of the animals are little more than stylized and their faces are very schematic. The stylized rams’ heads with a stepped hairstyle are reminiscent of bracelets from Pasargadae and Greece (e.g. bracelet in Karlsruhe). The shape of the lion’s paw just below the handle is so naturalistic that it suggests it was produced in the west; on oriental furniture, lion paws appear only in stylised form. The

characteristics marking this piece – lack of ornamentation, heavily stylized faces, naturalistic animal paws, and the double wall – do not fit the canon of ancient Near Eastern art known so far. In my opinion, the vessel is excellent proof that we should also reckon with objects from antiquity that do not fit the canon known to us.

If this vessel came onto the art market – in addition to the indication of its origin, the “Urals” – it would arouse suspicion as to its authenticity. This find should be considered as a warning not to jump to the conclusion that things are modern simply because they are unusual and do not fit to known canonical shapes. The field of various influences on art is particularly wide in the Persian Empire, especially as many regions with their own and already quite characteristic regional art are to be expected.

Therefore, there remains the problem of how to deal with minor Achaemenid art. In order to carry out a careful academic investigation regarding technique, the origin of shapes, the range of motifs, distribution, etc. and finally to be able to publish representative material in a volume devoted to the history of art and culture, we still need numerous finds in guaranteed contexts, both in the Achaemenid heartland and from the satrapies. Only with the help of excavated objects can dating be established and regional peculiarities more narrowly differentiated.

NOTE

- 1 Mahboubian (1995), inside front cover, 4, 11: The collection had already been published in 1978, but all the copies were destroyed during the Iranian Revolution in 1978/79. Because of the similarity in style of some “Kalmakarreh” objects and some Mahboubian objects, it seems to me that all the objects were produced in the same workshop over the last 30 years.

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SECTION XIII

HISTORY OF RESEARCH

CHAPTER 106

Western Europe

Julian Degen and Sean Manning

Memory of the Achaemenid Empire never died out completely in Europe. Readers of the Old Testament remembered its pictures of Cyrus and Xerxes. The Alexander Romance in all its versions spread stories of Alexander and his Persian enemies across Eurasia. Bestiaries promulgated some of Ctesias' monsters and scraps of lore such as the tradition that the river Tigris and the tiger were named after the Persian word for arrow. Justin's story of Artaxerxes murdering Artabanus was a popular subject for illuminators. Niccolò Machiavelli appealed to "Moses, Cyrus, Theseus, and Romulus" as models of the man who rose to rule through excellence, and debated whether the Achaemenid Empire was more similar to France or Turkey in his own day (Machiavelli, *Il Principe*, cap. IV and VI). After knowledge of Greek was reintroduced into western Europe, most of the Greek and Latin sources which we know today were available to scholars. Learned travelers such as Cornelis de Bruijn also described monuments which we now identify as Achaemenid. However, before the nineteenth century this interest in Persia rarely produced serious, methodical research, and so it is beyond the scope of this chapter. A history of research is not a history of reception.

Defining scholarship in western Europe is difficult, since many scholars are raised in one country, educated in another, and spend most of their working life in a third. This chapter concentrates on research written in German-speaking countries, the United Kingdom, France, and Italy. Group projects and edited volumes are classified by the nationality of the majority of their organizers.

Rather than fitting all research into a single narrative, this survey has been divided in three ways. The first is a chronological overview of influential monographs and projects. Next comes an overview of significant researchers organized by nationality. Last is an overview of particular topics and types of publication. Hopefully at least one of these structures will meet the needs of every reader.

Chronological Survey

The Beginning of Modern Research

One western European who did conduct intensive research on the Achaemenid Empire before the 1840s was Barnabé Brisson, a French jurist of the sixteenth century. Brisson's prolific writings included a study of everything which the remains of Greek and Latin literature had to say about the customs and institutions of Achaemenid Persia. He published his research in a single Latin volume, *De Regio Persarum Principatu libri tres*, which went through various editions between 1590 and 1710. Brissonius was a tireless but not indiscriminating collector: he rejected the Alexander Romance and most Latin writers after the fifth century, while including Greek commentaries and scholarly works up to the time of the Suda. He also distinguished between the Persians and the Parthians, and made limited use of sources on the Sasanid period. While he usually presents the sources which he does cite as facts, he sometimes acknowledges that authorities differ, and he avoids long digressions on morals. His description of Persian religion, a particularly sensitive subject in his day, presents it as similar to Greek and Roman paganism and does not emphasize the names Ormazd and Zoroaster. David M. Lewis suggests that he sought an orderly kingdom in the past to make up for the civil wars of his own kingdom in the present, and chose his citations accordingly.¹

The continuous flow of research into the Achaemenid Empire since the nineteenth century has its origins in many streams, from Ranke's advocacy of archival research and focus on describing the past rather than morally interpreting it, to William Jones' proposal that Indian and European languages descended from a lost ancestor and the subsequent development of the comparative method, to the intense interest in the bible in the nineteenth century, and to the early European excavations in the Middle East and discovery of the Neo-Assyrian palaces. The variety of sources for studying the ancient world rapidly increased, but how to organize and integrate them was not so clear. Through the decipherment of cuneiform by Edward Hincks, Henry Rawlinson, and Julius Oppert, the scientific community gained access to a great number of indigenous texts.

One of the first scholars to present the essentials of this new picture to the public was George Rawlinson in his *The Five / Seven Great Monarchies of the Ancient Eastern World* (the number of empires increased from five to seven in successive editions). Each empire was the subject of a book which discussed geography, culture, language, art, religion, and political history. The book on his fifth empire, the Persian, moves lightly back and forth between the Achaemenid period and later ones in areas such as flora and fauna or the racial characteristics of the Iranians. Although he did not make much use of citations, he seems to have tried to hide the seams between Greek and Latin literature, monumental sculpture, and the inscriptions, but to warn his readers when he supplemented these sources with later ones. Disagreements between sources are not emphasized. He identified the Persian religion as originally dualistic and Zoroastrian, but later corrupted by the Magi and other foreign priests. Rawlinson is at once a man of his time and part of a community with researchers today. His analysis of Iranian prehistory considers Assyrian records, early Greek, and Zoroastrian texts, the genealogies in royal inscriptions, philology, and physiognomy, to which modern scholars have added archaeology and genetics. Many scholars to the present day agree with him that the Achaemenid Empire should be grouped with the Assyrians and Parthians, but not with the Seleucids or Romans.

Rawlinson's works were the first markers of a new approach to the exploration of the ancient Near East. The decipherment of cuneiform scripts and the continuous establishment of Assyriology as an independent academic subject opened new ways to approach the ancient Near East. The Achaemenid Empire no longer remained a construct solely described by classical sources. One result of the availability of both types of sources was the development of comparative studies, which gave new perspectives on the multiple worlds of the ancient Near East as well as the Greek and Latin texts (cf. Haubold 2013: pp. 1–17, who gives a short introduction into the rise of comparative studies).

Aside from the first archaeological discoveries, the interest of European scholars in the Achaemenids arose not only from visiting the ancient sites but also from their libraries in their homelands. One important starting point of research was the “*Klassizismus*” of mid and late nineteenth-century Germany. While concentrating on the works of Greek authors of the classical period as well as of the time of Alexander, scholars become aware of their focus on the Achaemenid Empire as the counterpart of the classical world. This occupancy was reinforced when the works of the nineteenth-century philologist Karl Müller on the fragments of Greek historiographers were continued by Jacoby. These works amplified our corpus of classical and Hellenistic written sources – for example, the important work of Ctesias found its first academic editing. The treatment of the Achaemenids in the *Geschichte des Altertums* by

Eduard Meyer (first volume 1884, many later editions) was also influential. Thus, academic engagement with the Achaemenids arose slowly, because the ancient Near East was one of the main topics of the literature of the classical world especially in the fifth and fourth centuries BCE. These discoveries, as well as the archaeological ones, built up the firm ground for modern research.

Research in the Early Twentieth Century

After the decipherment of the Old Persian cuneiform inscriptions by Grotefend and Rawlinson, researchers were able to understand the contents of the few royal inscriptions of the Achaemenids (see Chapter 6 The Inscriptions of the Achaemenids). Thus, in 1904 Christian Bartholomae published the comprehensive *Altiranisches Wörterbuch*. Although mainly concerned with the different forms of Avestan, he also considered Old Persian. Words like “*karka-*” (an ethnic from the royal inscriptions) appear next to old Avestan words like *taθrya-* “dark, lightless” (Bartholomae 1904: pp. 451, 650). Proper names were also included, but mainly from literary texts such as the royal inscriptions and Zoroastrian literature. Bartholomae showed little interest in Old Persian words attested in other languages, from the Greek lexicographers (e.g. Bartholomae 1904: p. 651 s.v. *tigra-*) to cuneiform texts (Bartholomae 1904: p. vii), and in statements by speakers of other languages about Old Iranian. Each entry consists of a word, a short definition, a list of passages using that term, and sometimes a short note discussing related words, scholarly literature, and etymology. All words were transcribed into Latin letters but organized after the Avestan order beginning with vowels. Unfortunately, since Bartholomae’s time no more long texts in Iranian languages from the Achaemenid period have been discovered. While short texts and improved understanding of Old Iranian philology allowed some progress, and dictionaries continued to be produced, the corpus of Old Persian texts remained small.

A first historical synopsis based on all available evidence was the very progressive habilitation treatise of the German scholar Junge (1944). The enlistment of indigenous sources for a biography of King Darius I was an adventurous enterprise for an historical work, at a time when philhellenism dominated German-speaking scholarship. Although this biography is still often cited, Junge’s work suffers from the influence of National Socialist ideology, to which he was passionately devoted.

Research in the Postwar Period 1945–1980

Most areas of research saw an increase in publications after the Second World War, and research into the Achaemenid Empire was no exception. Although the Achaemenid Empire was not commonly conceived as an area of speciality,

scholars from different disciplines published their perspectives on different aspects of the empire. In 1955 the first volume of a new series on Iranian documents and inscriptions was published. The title *Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum* (CII) suggests emulation of Mommsen's famous *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* and the similar projects for classical Greek inscriptions. Although the editors understood their task broadly, the volumes on Naqš-i Rostam, the Behistun inscription, and Old Persian inscriptions from Persepolis were especially important for Achaemenid studies. Some volumes, like Shabazi's (1985) edition of the Old Persian inscriptions on the Persepolis platform, just provide photographs with a minimum of commentary. Others, such as von Voigtländer's (1978) edition of the Babylonian inscription at Behistun, are centered around a transcription and provide translation and commentary. While brief, the introductions to volumes of the CII often address the main scholarly debates centered on a text. Voigtländer, for example, provided not only a painstaking analysis of differences in orthography, sign-forms, and line height which could indicate different scribes, but also some pointed comments on Darius and the inscription. In her view, Old Persian might not have been Darius' native language, the Old Persian text was probably composed in response to the other versions, and the dates and casualty figures should be understood as conjectures (von Voigtlander 1978: pp. 6–8; for a broader discussion see Chapter 3 Peoples and Languages).

Meanwhile, many researchers were interested in conflicts between the Achaemenid Empire and the Greek cities, the so-called Persian Wars. The topic demanded that their authors spend some time discussing the early Achaemenid Empire, and many scholars read them who were not otherwise interested in the empire. One book which showed particular interest in the realm of Cyrus and Darius was A.R. Burn's *Persia and the Greeks*. Burn began by considering the problem of sources. As he put it, "when we seek opportunities to check Herodotus' accuracy, we are for the most part baffled by the sheer lack of other material" (Burn 1962: p. 5). He did not think much of the traditions on the Persian War preserved by writers of the Roman period, on the grounds that patriotism and rivalries between Greeks had quickly corrupted oral tradition, and that later writers had not shown much interest in Herodotus' contemporaries and predecessors. The only non-Greek text which he discusses in the introduction is the Behistun inscription, although Babylonian chronicles, the Old Testament, and various Egyptian texts are discussed in the body of the book. Burn structured the rest of the book as a chronological narrative roughly following the order of Herodotus. Along the way he digressed on Iranian religion, the policies of Darius, and the logistics of Xerxes' invasion. In the first he stressed both the similarity between the practices which Herodotus describes and those proscribed in the Avesta, and the difficulty of showing that the kings were orthodox Zoroastrians. He

settled on the view that Darius had been influenced by Zoroastrian ideas without adopting them strictly. His account of Darius' policy is epistemologically optimistic, listing the promulgation of a code of law and the restoration of the House of Life at Saïs next to all the deeds listed in Herodotus and the royal inscriptions. In the course of his retelling of the Behistun inscription he expressed some doubts but did not develop them.²

The known vocabulary of Old Iranian had grown considerably since the day of Bartholomae, especially due to texts from Persepolis. In 1975 Walther Hinz gathered the results of this new research in *Altiranisches Sprachgut der Nebenüberlieferungen* (= Hinz 1975). By "Nebenüberlieferungen" he meant texts in non-Iranian languages such as Elamite, Aramaic, or Ancient Greek which contained Iranian names, loanwords, or phrases. Hinz realized that the availability of texts in many different languages made it easier to identify and reconstruct Old Iranian forms, but the scattering of research across different publications made it difficult to understand the new discoveries as a whole. Hinz wrote for fellow Iranian philologists. He did not explain his system for transcribing Old Iranian, nor all of his abbreviations, and the only aid for readers which he included was a backward dictionary. He organized his book alphabetically according to the reconstructed Old Iranian form. Each entry consists of a part of speech, a list of the texts where the word is attested, a German translation, and notes on phonology, earlier literature, and debates. Words known through compounds, such as *farnah* "glory," do not receive entries unless they are attested independently. Hinz's book gave scholars a concise corpus of Old Iranian words used in everyday life to compare to the vocabulary of the royal inscriptions. While helpful for understanding those inscriptions, it also opened up the possibility of studying Persian thought and contact between speakers of different languages in much more detail than had previously been possible.

Aside from the focus on the Achaemenid heartlands in the late 1960s, archaeologists became increasingly interested in the western satrapies. One such study is that of J. Borchhardt (1968), which is focused on the reliefs of Cilicia. The author aims to present not solely a study with a pure archaeological focus, but rather to show the context the Graeco-Persian reliefs in their broader cultural context. Since A. Furtwängler (1900), Persian seals which were cut by Greeks were called Graeco-Persian, but this *terminus technicus* was soon applied to other materials such as reliefs or architecture. Because this term is imprecise, newer research uses the terms "mixed style," "Greek style," (Boardman 1970) or recently "Anatolian style" or "achaemenizing." Archaeologists and art historians remain concerned with identifying 'Persian' motifs or artefacts.

Britain has a long tradition of political history of classical Greece. In 1977 David M. Lewis made a striking new contribution to this tradition (Lewis 1977). Lewis considered the relationship between Sparta and Persia between

the middle of the fifth century and the King's Peace, and stressed the need to balance the 'personal' perspective of the Greek sources and the 'bureaucratic' perspective of the Persepolis Fortification Tablets. Political narratives based on close reading of the Greek historians were a traditional genre, but in his conclusion Lewis developed a theme which other researchers had not often stressed. Lewis observed that Spartans had been divided between those who saw themselves as champions of Greek liberty against the Persians and those who saw the Persians as people with whom they had much in common. These two points of view waxed and waned in influence according to the outcome of battles, events in other Greek cities, the deaths of kings and officials, and other accidents. Only afterwards, as a result of political events inside Greece, had the anti-Persian perspective become dominant. Lewis demonstrated that it was possible to use Greek sources to tell stories which gave the Persians an active role, and that there was room for such stories at Oxford.

The 1970s also saw the first publication of a major project in Iranian onomastics, the *Iranisches Personennamenbuch* (IPNB: Schmitt, Eichner, Fragner, and Sadoski [eds.] 2003). Based out of Vienna, the *Personennamenbuch* proposes to provide an overview and analysis of Iranian names from the earliest written sources to the present. The editors envisioned their work as a supplement to Ferdinand Justi's book from 1895 which took into account the texts and languages discovered since then and listed variants under lemmata with a common etymological root (Schmitt 2006: pp. 7–12 [a history of Iranian onomastics to 2006]). They seem to have envisioned three main volumes for Old, Middle, and New Persian. In the meantime, however, Walther Hinz had made a convincing argument that texts in other languages were central to modern understanding of Old Iranian, and the difficulty of gathering and organizing all of these sources had become clear. The project quickly became divided by source language and type of document, and the individual fascicles organized by spelling in the language studied not after the modern language. After publishing a series of volumes on texts before the Roman period between 1977 and 1990, the project ceased publication until 2003, when a supplement on Middle Persian inscriptions appeared. In 2006 Rüdiger Schmitt, one of the leaders of the project, published a volume stating that the IPNB was worthwhile and would continue but that "to write a pan-Iranian book of names as a unified work, as it were, 'in a single pour' is impossible today" (Schmitt 2006: p. 11). Fascicles published since then cover Iranian names in Greek literature before Alexander the Great, Iranian names in Neo-Babylonian and Late Babylonian texts, and Iranian names in the Hebrew Bible. With their inclusion of all variant spellings and all citations of common names, as well as prosopographical and etymological information, these new volumes are the most comprehensive available, but their impact remains to be seen.

Scholars in Europe continued to publish on art history and archaeology. P.R.S. Moorey was an especially influential researcher in this area. In 1980 he published a volume on the cemeteries at Deve Hüyük which had been looted and salvaged in 1913. The cemeteries contained many furnished inhumations which seemed to belong to settlers from Iran buried during the fifth century BCE. Some of the graves contained arms and armour, providing archaeological evidence to compare to the reliefs at Persepolis and Herodotus' description of the weapons of different nations. The bulk of the book is a catalog of finds with sketches and discussions of parallels. In one chapter, however, Moorey turned to the question of why archaeologists had found few traces of the empire in the ground. This had produced a controversy between positivists, often specialists in the archaeology of the eastern part of the empire, who saw the lack of identifiable finds as evidence that Persian rule was superficial, and maximalists, often with a background in history, who believed that archaeologists just needed to look harder or that a strong central government did not necessarily cause new forms of pottery to develop. After discussing some general problems, such as the Persian willingness to work with local traditions and the tendency for objects of precious metal to come from the art market rather than from documented excavations, he considered the archaeological evidence for each region of the empire. In most regions he noted the scarcity of firmly dated sites and artifacts in the Achaemenid court style. Moorey concluded that "the Persian cultural impact was everywhere circumscribed" but that the luxury goods which traveled with the ruling class were imitated by subjects and exported beyond the empire. He also suggested that the empire had helped to spread southwest Asian motifs into Europe and central Asia.

Continuity and Change in the 1980s

Achaemenid studies in Europe flourished in the 1980s with many important conferences and publications. Achaemenid studies began to be recognized as a discipline with common assumptions and standards rather than a topic which scholars from different fields might dabble in. Yet the same period also saw scholars publicizing the old idea of the Persians as the "other," such as the Western Way of War theory associated with Victor Davis Hanson.³ These movements were certainly influenced by broader political events, such as the late Cold War and the fall of the Shah's regime in Iran. In 1982 Mary Boyce, already well known for her studies of early Iranian religion, turned her attention to the Achaemenid period with *A History of Zoroastrianism: Under the Achaemenians, Volume II*: (Boyce 1982; for a biography see Hinnells 2010). Boyce was greatly impressed by the continuity of Iranian religious traditions, and believed that her contact with living Zoroastrian and Parsi communities helped her understand the ancient evidence. She saw Zoroaster as a historical

person of the second millennium BCE somewhere in the neighborhood of Bactria. She envisioned the early Medes and Persians as practicing a religion similar to Zoroastrianism, but with some distinct practices such as inhumation in earth, and some influence from “alien faiths” such as the cult of Ishtar. Although Cyrus’ own inscriptions do not mention Ahuramazda, and later Zoroastrian traditions ignore Cyrus, she appealed to Second Isaiah and to the designs of some buildings attributed to Cyrus’ reign as evidence that he acted according to distinctively Zoroastrian ideas. From the time of Darius onward she was on firmer ground, and she showed that Darius’ monuments and inscriptions could be reconciled with Zoroastrianism if one made the right assumptions. If the administrative texts from Persepolis recorded sacrifices to many beings unknown from the Avesta, Zoroaster’s words permitted his followers to honor lesser divinities. In later reigns she was most impressed with the spread of the cult of Anahita and with hints that the ideas later known as Zurvanism were popular in the fourth century BCE. Here and elsewhere, she made it clear that she identified with the orthodoxy of later periods and saw other practices as heresy, impurity, or paganism (e.g. Boyce 1982: pp. 36–39 (early Iranian religion), 231–239 (Zurvanism), 286–292 (Alexander)). Boyce sought at once to consider all kinds of evidence, from tombs and fire altars to names and formulas to testimonia in Greek and Iranian literature, and to fit as much of this evidence as possible into a Zoroastrian framework. When this was difficult, she appealed to foreign influence, or to the gap between living religion and the form promulgated in writing (e.g. Boyce 1982: pp. 61, 67, 83, 241–242).

Also in the early 1980s the German scholar W. Nagel (1982) published about Ninus and Semiramis, in which he suggests that Ctesias’ accounts contain authentic Persian stories, which were reinterpreted by the Greeks of the fourth and third centuries BCE. He contends that Persia was subordinated to a Median empire, and also that Ctesias lived at the Persian court and learned the court languages. Nagel (1983) also offers a profound archaeological investigation of the Behistun relief and the implications for Darius I’s campaign against the Saka.

In 1983 J.M. Cook published a new overview of the Achaemenid Empire to provide an alternative to A.T. Olmstead’s. He decided to focus on the ethnic Persians and devote few words to scholarly debates, occasionally presenting an alternative to his own view or stating what most scholars thought. His descriptions of the geography of the empire are vivid and full of feeling inspired by conditions in later periods. *The Persian Empire* is populated by living human beings, not abstractions and traditions. Almost every page has an explicit comparison to some other place and time, and these comparisons invite the reader to imagine the world which the extant sources reflect. Yet he usually accepted the narratives in his main sources, above all the theme that

the Persians rose from obscurity, ruled in power for several generations, then slowly declined amidst intrigue at court and wars in the mountains and along the coast. In the following years most of these narratives were challenged. His comparisons were often specific, but rarely developed or justified, so it is not clear whether they reflect serious research into other cultures or simple general knowledge. While he sometimes appealed to Egypt, Mesopotamia, or his own Britain for parallels, more often he appealed to “oriental monarchies” of the last thousand years from the Ottomans and Safavids to the Mongols.⁴ This also went out of academic fashion over the following decades.

In the 1960s some British scholars and the ambassador of Iran launched a new series, *The Cambridge History of Iran*. Its title and form suggested parallels with *The Cambridge Ancient History* and other well-known reference works. In 1985 the volume on “the Median and Achaemenian periods” (Gershevitch 1985) was published after a long delay. Each chapter was written by a distinguished scholar, most of them older and based in the USA, Britain, or Russia. Little was done to integrate them, so each chapter reflects the author’s individual style and interests. “The Median and Achaemenian Periods” differed from previous overviews in several significant ways. It put the Achaemenid Empire into a specifically Iranian context. Where Rawlinson had grouped the Achaemenid Empire with other “Oriental monarchies,” and Olmstead had focused on the empire and periods immediately before and afterwards, “The Median and Achaemenian Periods” implied that the empire belonged with other Iranian states. Rather than attempting to present a continuous narrative, it offered separate chapters on Cyrus the Great, Persia, and the Greeks, and the Persian occupation of Egypt. Different chapters have very different tones, with the more westerly and historical ones following the spirit of the Greek narratives closely and the more easterly and archaeological ones mentioning Greek writers only in passing. The sheer scale of “The Median and Achaemenian Periods” and the assignment of individual chapters to specialists also enabled more detail, and sometimes more rigor, than earlier treatments in surveys. Even more ambitious was the *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, whose first volume was published in 1985. The *Encyclopaedia* sought to cover all aspects of Iranian languages, history, and culture from prehistoric times to the present. Although based at Columbia University, many prominent European researchers contributed chapters, including Rüdiger Schmitt and Amélie Kuhrt. At present the print volumes cover only the letters “A” through “K” but a number of articles with titles beginning with other letters are available in the online version. As an encyclopedic work written by many scholars over decades, it is difficult to generalize about the *Encyclopaedia*. Most authors wrote for other scholars who needed a guide to their topic and the relevant research, and succeeded in capturing the state of the field at their time of writing. A few contributions, such as Mary Boyce’s “Achaemenid Religion,” were more controversial.

The other great Achaemenid project of the 1980s was the Achaemenid History Workshops. Every year from 1983 to 1990 Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg organized a conference for about 30 scholars in Groningen, London, or Ann Arbor. The scholars who attended these workshops had diverse training and interests, but most of them accepted some general principles. They tried to integrate work from different disciplines, rather than letting Assyriologists, Classicists, and archaeologists work in isolation on the types of sources which they knew best. They took a skeptical approach to the classical literary sources, emphasizing signs that Greek and Roman writers had distorted, misunderstood, or invented Persian practice. Workshop members asked how one might interpret other kinds of evidence without the Greek and Latin narratives. They also challenged received traditions, especially when these traditions could be linked to later stereotypes about Orientals. As far as possible, workshop members tried to gather different kinds of evidence and look at it afresh without assuming that Greek and Latin literature provided the basic framework which other evidence could supplement or correct on details.

A paper that will stand for many others is Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg's "Was there ever a Median Empire?" (Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1988). Sancisi-Weerdenburg argued that the idea of a powerful Median Empire depended on the vivid stories from Herodotus book 1, but that there was no contemporary Near Eastern evidence for such an empire, and that Herodotus' narrative contained contradictions. She suggested that scholars had projected Herodotus' picture on the Near Eastern sources, and that Herodotus himself had assumed that the Medes must have had a centralized kingdom like the Persians did. In the following decades Sancisi-Weerdenburg's view became a common one (see Chapter 25 The Median Dilemma).

The Achaemenid History Workshops would not have existed without a group of scholars who were already dissatisfied with how Achaemenid history was written. A good deal was written on the Achaemenid Empire in the 1980s which was not influenced by the workshops, and a handful of earlier works took a similar point of view. In a generally sympathetic review of the first three conference proceedings, Simon Hornblower complained that some of the contributors brushed over work by classicists who were sympathetic to their own view (Hornblower 1990). Yet the workshops brought these dissatisfied scholars together and helped them develop their ideas and find like-minded colleagues. The conference proceedings also enabled them to publish arguments which editors in other venues might have seen as too bold. It is difficult to see how Achaemenid studies could have changed so suddenly without the workshops, or how such a movement could have begun anywhere else than Western Europe, since few other regions contained enough scholars interested in different aspects of the Achaemenid Empire. Over the following decades the methods of the Achaemenid History Workshops became usual in Achaemenid studies.

Most European scholars have shown little interest in the military side of the Achaemenid Empire, except as context for Greek military and political history. In 1992 Duncan Head published a 72-page booklet on *The Achaemenid Persian Army* for Montvert Publications, a small press for wargamers. Head's book belongs to a tradition of serious amateur scholarship by wargamers, retired soldiers, and lovers of arms and armor. This tradition has been particularly strong in the United Kingdom, where between the 1960s and the 1980s many important works were published.

Head's book is an overview organized by topics and an early/late dichotomy. He carefully tracked down and summarized works on texts in cuneiform scripts and Aramaic to complement the work on Greek and Latin texts which his readers were more familiar with. He also took care to provide line drawings of artwork and artefacts which had been previously scattered in different scholarly publications. His comments on scholarly debates are thoughtful and often propose new solutions. The result was an impressive synthesis which despite its small size is useful both to academics and to the wider public. Unfortunately few copies of Head's book reached academic libraries, and it quickly went out of print.

Head relied on earlier studies of specific questions by scholars such as Nicholas Sekunda, Herman T. Wallinga, and Christopher Tuplin. These scholars produced several meticulous articles which saw the military side of the Achaemenid Empire as an object of study in itself rather than as background to the interpretation of Strabo or the Behistun inscription (Sekunda 1985, 1988a; Tuplin 1987). After 1992 their publication on Achaemenid military matters slowed down, and few other scholars imitated them. European scholars found topics such as the court, religion, and the interpretation of cuneiform sources more congenial. The growing community of ancient military historians was drawn to studying the Roman army or responding to Victor Davis Hanson's picture of Greek warfare (Manning 2020).

In 1994 Josef Wiesehöfer published a survey of the Achaemenid Empire in *Das antike Persien* (Wiesehöfer 1994). Wiesehöfer placed the Achaemenid Empire in the context of pre-Islamic Iran. Both the period before Cyrus the Great and the period from Alexander to the collapse of the Seleucids were covered very briefly, although he warned against the tendency to see the Seleucid period as irrelevant to Iran, or Iran as irrelevant to the Seleucids. Rather than a chronological narrative, Wiesehöfer focused on a synchronic description of various practices and areas of life such as court culture, the structure of the empire, and everyday life. He began his section on the Achaemenids, like the sections on the Parthians and Sasanids which followed it, with a description of the sources. He stressed sources in the languages used by the kings and officials, and did not emphasize Greek and Latin texts. His chapter on everyday life in Persis relied on the Persepolis tablets.

At several points Wiesehöfer commented at length about the ancient and modern ideologies which had determined how the evidence was read, such as the idea of Persian decadence. He also stressed problems and difficulties, such as the debate about how lists of lands or peoples related to the structure of the empire (Wiesehöfer 1994: p. 94). On the topic of Achaemenid religion he remarked that on one hand it was difficult to know how Zoroastrianism was practiced during the Achaemenid period, and that on the other hand the tablets from Persepolis showed many gods and practices unknown to the Avesta. He concluded the book with a bibliographical essay which focused on the most important recent works in German, French, and English. Wiesehöfer's book seems to have been widely read and received an update and English translation in 1996 (Weischöfer 1996).

A New Synthesis: Pierre Briant and The Discipline of Achaemenid Studies

The Achaemenid History Workshops demanded a new synthesis which reflected both the latest research and their distinctive perspective. At the same time, by challenging old assumptions, by insisting on a multidisciplinary approach, and by inspiring a large body of research, they had made such a synthesis more difficult to write. While Wiesehöfer had provided a short introduction and placed the Achaemenid Empire in the context of other pre-Islamic Iranian empires, there was still room for a more detailed book for specialists focused on the Achaemenid Empire in particular. In 1996 Pierre Briant, a regular participant in the Achaemenid History Workshops and frequent publisher on Achaemenid matters, published such a synthesis under the title *Histoire de l'Empire perse de Cyrus à Alexandre*. His book became the center of research into the Achaemenid Empire, a sort of *summa achaemenidologica*. Briant's book has a very different tone than earlier surveys of the Achaemenid Empire. Whereas Cook and Olmstead are written for a broad public, with vivid descriptions and simplified explanations, Briant's work is very technical and meant for readers familiar with the major problems. Whereas Meyer, Cook, and Olmstead give detailed and confident political narratives, Briant asks how we ought to interpret our sources. Rather than a simple bibliography, Briant included a series of research notes which filled 174 pages in the second edition of his book (Briant 2002: pp. 877–1050). The audience for such a book was in itself a product of the 1980s.

Briant followed the *Histoire* with two reports on research published since it was finished, and revised it for its English translation in 2002 (Briant 1997, 2002). These books also became standard tools, and linked it to work published after he sent the *Histoire* to press. The *Histoire* provided scholars with an introduction to the results of the Achaemenid History Workshops

and invited them to read further and contribute to the debates. In doing so, Briant also impressed his personality and interests on subsequent research into the empire.

Research After 1996

In 1996 Maria Brosius published the first long study of Persian royal women in Achaemenid times (Brosius 1996). To counter the moralistic flavor of many Greek writers, she examined Babylonian sources and the Persepolis archives and tried to understand customs and institutions. She noted parallels in Assyrian, Babylonian, and Elamite courts for an office of “king’s mother.” The archives from Persepolis gave her the opportunity to study women acting as workers and estate managers, and she suggested that they showed a low level of gender inequality. Her study of the marriages of Persian kings also gave her occasion to forcefully state that Cyrus’ line died with Bardiya and that Darius was the first Achaemenid king known to history. In her view, Darius’ marriage to the daughters of Cyrus and Bardiya after he became king shows that he had special need to bind himself to their family and ensure that none of them had sons by any other man.

New sources and new research on Old Iranian languages had continued to appear since Walther Hinz’s book. In 2007 Jan Tavernier published a new synthesis of Old Iranian words preserved in texts written in other languages. He excluded Greek and Latin texts but did not explain why.

Tavernier’s book is immense and intricate. After a short introduction Tavernier sets out individual Iranian words, grouped first by the type of evidence and second by semantics. Each entry consists of a reconstructed form, a reconstruction with the individual morpheme separated by dashes, a derivation or definition, an overview of previous scholarship, and a list of source texts. The source texts are further divided by orthography since scribes often rendered Iranian words in different ways. The notes on earlier literature and the long section on *Incerta* help non-specialists identify areas where they should be cautious. The entry for the name Kuraš, for example, summarizes the attempts to find an Old Persian etymology for this name but warns that “Kuraš is probably an Elamite name” (Tavernier 2007: pp. 528, 529). Tavernier concluded his book with a list of names and lexical elements. These lists include words documented as part of compounds as well as those attested on their own. The 222 pages of indices include all written forms and all texts cited. While Tavernier’s promised analysis of this evidence has not yet appeared, *Iranica in the Achaemenid Period* goes further than any other study in making the evidence for Old Iranian languages attested in other languages available to non-specialists.

Although most of the most important texts from the Achaemenid period were available in critical editions and translations, the Greek and Roman literary sources remained more accessible, especially to undergraduates and researchers without a

well-funded academic library. In 2007 Amélie Kuhrt published a sourcebook which aimed to change this. Her two weighty volumes include a sample of all the known corpora of texts which describe the Achaemenid period, and some of the works of art. Each text or image is carefully annotated and linked to scholarly debates and other relevant sources. Short lists of previous editions and suggested further reading also help guide readers deeper into the scholarly literature.

Sourcebooks are especially important in Achaemenid studies, since few scholars can learn all the relevant languages, and not all can obtain editions of all the main texts. Providing translations and a guide to other editions is of use to most students. In addition, the growth of Achaemenid studies had encrusted some key texts with very dense glosses and debates. Kuhrt's sourcebook encouraged beginners to start from the sources, including some which are less often read, and only then proceed to the commentary.

Another type of source is archival tablets from Persepolis. The richness of these texts has never been fully explored because the old standard editions of the Oriental Institute of Chicago do not contain all the Fortification or Treasury texts. Wouter Henkelman's (2008) edited dissertation can be seen as a fresh European work, which presents new texts to us while examining specific topics in Elamite history and culture. His work presents four case studies in Elamite-Iranian acculturation, on the basis of the Persepolis Fortification Tablets. Through his occupation with the "lan" sacrifice, the background of the divinities, the god Humban, and the origin of the Persian paradise, he emphasized that Persian identity was a cultural construct. Thus the Elamite state and the Elamites themselves played a crucial role for forming Persian identity. Henkelman's dissertation treatise offers a detailed introduction to the Persepolis Fortification Archive, which can be used separately as a useful orientation.

The books by Kuhrt and Henkelman provide a reasonable place to end this survey, since they reflect the trends which have dominated research for the last ten years. Dialogue between disciplines and types of evidence continues, and more and more researchers put the Achaemenid Empire in context with earlier Mesopotamian kingdoms and cuneiform sources. Yet there is something of a reaction against the Achaemenid History Workshops (Harrison 2011; Llewellyn-Jones 2013) by scholars who feel that participants were too defensive of the Achaemenids and too cautious about comparisons with later periods. Only in retrospect will it be possible to say which recent publications had a lasting influence and which approaches proved productive.

Scholarship in Different Countries

Although Achaemenid studies is an international discipline, and some trends have affected scholars in all countries, national differences remain. Some kinds of research receive institutional support in particular countries, or build off the

work of earlier generations of scholars. Many scholars who could not be mentioned in the chronological survey above also deserve mention. This section will survey scholarship on the Achaemenid Empire in different countries.

United Kingdom

British scholars of the Achaemenid Empire are too numerous to fully discuss here. British scholars with a background in classics have continued to write influential political and military histories, since the main sources are in Greek. The establishment of the British Institute of Persian Studies (BIPS) in 1961 can be seen as the fruit of a long tradition of interest in the culture and history of Persia. The diverse interests of the institution include the Achaemenid impact in the ancient world, which was mainly explored through archaeological methods. The institute's own journal *Iran* is the main organ for publications. Through this journal the work of M. Roaf was published, which emphasized "Sculptures and Sculptors at Persepolis" (Roaf 1983). This work stands for many others which are connected to the archaeology of the Achaemenid world. The BIPS for a long time was responsible for excavations in Pasargadae, Sirāf, Tepe Nush-i Jan (Nuš-e Jān), and Shahr-i Qumis (Šahr-e Qumes).

After the Second World War the Swiss-Russian emigrant Ilya Gershevitch became one of Britain's most noted scholars. With his contributions to philological questions on Old Persian and Elamite texts, as well as his role as co-editor of the volume "Median and Achaemenid Period" of *The Cambridge History of Iran*, he laid the foundation for later works on these subjects. The great number of his works on Iranian religion still influence modern scholars.

One of the biggest names in Achaemenid studies is Amélie Kuhrt, who is known as a founding member of the Achaemenid History Workshops and also for her very useful sourcebook with its excellent bibliography.

Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones is engaged with the interactions between the Greek world and the Achaemenid Empire through Greek historiography. He co-edited a book on the wars between these two counterparts, with a special focus on military history (De Souza et al. 2004). Ctesias is another of his main research interests.

With his interests in Classics and Egyptology, Christopher Tuplin offers new ways to understand the Achaemenid Empire. One of his latest publications on Xenophon was a well-received contribution on this author. The book covers with its papers a wide range of themes, and mentions Xenophon as a classical author as well as a source for Persia under the Achaemenids (Hobden and Tuplin 2012). The problem of the centrality of Greek sources for the reconstruction of Achaemenid history was the main topic of his published anthology about political and cultural interactions

with the Achaemenid Empire (Tuplin 2007). The well-reviewed book can stand for his other works.

A very useful tool is Thomas Harrison's book *Writing Ancient Persia*, which can be used as a general introduction to the subject for students with extensive bibliography and presentation of activities of modern research on the Achaemenids (Harrison 2011).

While recent British scholarship is concentrated on the cultural and political views of Greek literature on the Achaemenid Empire, Nicholas V. Sekunda dedicated himself with many books on questions on the military history.

Belgium and the Netherlands

Scholars from Belgium and the Netherlands are known for gathering and collecting Iranian and Elamite sources as well analyzing them through the lens of religious studies. Heleen Sancisci-Weerdenburg with her focus on history was an exception. She was responsible for the establishment of Achaemenid studies as an independent discipline.

The Dutchman Robartus van der Spek specializes in economic aspects of ancient Mesopotamia, especially in the Achaemenid Empire. He published several articles on early Achaemenid history and on the afterlife of Achaemenid economic institutions in Hellenistic times. To point out one of his works, his analysis of the Assyrian background of deportations under Cyrus II emphasized that Cyrus acted in the same way as his Assyrian predecessors. His more favorable treatment in western historiography is not based on differences in his behavior (van der Spek 2014).

Since the discovery of archives at Persepolis, these texts have been the subject of modern scholarship. Today Wouter F.M. Henkelman is one of the top scholars on this subject. His interests focus on the social, religious, and economic structures of the empire. With his interest in these archive texts he contributed many translations, editions, and research reports to these themes.

With his background in Indian and Iranian languages Willem J. Vogelsang added an eastern perspective to the history of the Achaemenids. He is also known as the translator of M.A. Dandamaev's *A Political History of the Achaemenid Empire*.

The languages of the Achaemenid Empire is one the professions of Jan Tavernier. He is known for writing a lexicon of Old Iranian proper names and loanwords which are attested in non-Iranian texts (Tavernier 2007).

France

From the beginning, France had an enormous output of academic work focused on the Achaemenids. At the beginning of the twentieth century the philological works of Émile Benveniste broke new ground. His engagement

covered Iranian studies, comparative grammar of Indo-European languages, and general linguistics. Thereby in the early 1930s he worked on an edition of the Old Persian Inscription with a special focus on grammar, which has remained a classic. One chapter of this work contains the first onomastic study of the Elamite texts from Persepolis. His survey of Persian religion, based on Greek sources, is also worth mentioning. This time was marked by a lack of indigenous sources, so Benveniste earned significance with his appointment as vice-president of the international committee for the CII. He was assigned to produce a definitive edition of all known Old Persian inscription, but illness prohibited it. His published work is an incomplete reflection of this fancier of Iranian languages and culture.

During Benveniste's career, interest in studying ancient Iranian culture in French was increasing. A specialist in the history of Mesopotamian law, Guillaume Cardascia, did some remarkable research. He contributed a new translation of the archives of the Murašû family with a commentary on the legal aspects (Cardascia 1951). In the following years he completed surveys about the Achaemenid army and tax systems (Cardascia 1977) and wrote a handful of lemmata for the *Encyclopaedia Iranica*; thus he laid the foundations for later French research. After spending decades studying ancient Iranian philology, the demand for a French historical account of the Achaemenids arose. At this point scholars like Pierre Briant with their deep interest in a critical approach to the history of the Achaemenid Empire, and skepticism of the discourse of decline, started to make use of the results of this philological research. With 20 monographs and nearly 200 articles, Briant's academic works cannot be overestimated. The following sentences can only sketch his significance for Achaemenid studies, in the foundation of which he played an important role. His methodology drew upon the idea of commonplaces or *topoi*, such as the "orientalization" of Alexander the Great, which he deconstructs. As a participant in many conferences touching on his subject, he is worth the title *grand connaisseur d'Achéménides*.

The newer French scholarship on the history of the Achaemenids is divided into specialized disciplines but connected through Pierre Briant. Notable for Egyptology is Damien Agut-Labordère, who focuses on Egypt under Persian rule. Omar Coloru, with his wide scope on research interests in Assyriology and ancient history, could also be mentioned. The works of Janick Auberger focus on Ctesias' *Persika*, especially their literary character.

French archaeological research in Iran has a long tradition and even booms nowadays. Among many others, only well-known names such as Rémy Boucharlat and François Vallat are mentioned here.⁵

Scandinavia

The Scandinavian Society for Iranian Studies (SSIS) focuses on modern Iran but also includes the Achaemenid era in its spectrum of research. For example, Ashk Dahlén is an Iranian professor and founder of SSIS, whose engagement at Uppsala University partly covers Achaemenid history. He edited a Swedish introduction into the subject (Dahlén 2016), whose topics cover general aspects of the Achaemenid Empire such as political history, languages, and material culture.

For archaeological research Sweden is important. Carl Nylander wrote one of the first books about Greek influence on Achaemenid art. Through analyzing the architecture and court art at Persepolis, he stated that there is plenty of evidence for a huge Ionian influence (Nylander 1970).

Aside from archaeological research, Scandinavian scholars are also of interest in philological aspects. Geo Widengren at the University of Uppsala made use of texts in a stunning variety of languages to study pre-Islamic Iran. He stressed continuity and was interested in religion and Indo-Iranian culture. The Norwegian P. Oktor Skjaervo, who had the chair as a professor at Harvard University for Near Eastern languages and civilizations, did a lot of research on Old Persian inscriptions and Zoroastrian religion and published a textbook on Old Persian.

Germany

German research on the Achaemenids and especially on Persia has a long tradition, but contemporary research seems to be booming. It is especially remarkable that this interest connects both classicists and Assyriologists rather than being divided into two disciplines. Hence this chapter focuses only on respected and recent German scholars whose works were not mentioned prior to this.

Peter Calmeyer published many important archaeological studies on cultural interactions between the Aegean world and the Achaemenid Empire. With a special interest in the portrayal of Achaemenid monuments in Greek historiography, he shaped the international scholarly discourse. Rykle Borger did some important research on the Behistun inscription and offered a tri-lingual translation, which is still a benchmark (Borger and Hinz 1984; Borger 1982). In general, an edition of the royal inscriptions in all three languages is a desideratum.

Over decades Josef Wieshöfer (University of Kiel) addressed all aspects of ancient Persia. His synthesis of pre-Islamic Persia (1994) has already been discussed above but is only a small part of his output. From detailed studies about Achaemenid affairs, up to Greek historiographical issues on the empire

and Persia under Alexander and the *diadochoi*, he earned a name as *the* German expert on the Achaemenids. Since 2016 Hilmar Klinkott is full professor of ancient history in Kiel, whose scientific focus lies on Achaemenid history, especially its social history and administration.

Heidemarie Koch, who worked at the University of Marburg until her retirement, is a specialist in Persia under Achaemenid rule, especially in the history of Elam and Elamite. She published works on religious and administrative aspects of the empire based on the Elamite tablets from Persepolis (Koch 1977, 1990).

Austria

Recent Austrian research is centered in Vienna and Innsbruck. The latter university offers a center focused on the detection and interpretation of ancient Near Eastern intellectual heritage in Greek and Roman historiography. Robert Rollinger in particular has put his mark on a huge range of research interests. His work on the Achaemenids is focused on Herodotus' and Ctesias' narratives and the Near Eastern context. One example is his study of the genealogy of Darius I, in which he considered all available traditions and pointed out that the family ties between the Achaemenids and the Teispids were constructed by Darius I. This strategy of legitimation was carried out by means of inscriptions, the dissemination and reception of which forms another of his interests (Rollinger 2016). Aside from this, he concentrated on the question of destructions in Babylon during the reigns of Cyrus, Darius, and Xerxes. The result was that Herodotus' account mainly represents a Greek perception of a mythical stylized metropolis, which was destroyed by oriental despots. In Rollinger's view, neither indigenous sources nor the archaeological record can support the statements of Herodotus' Babylonian *logos* (Rollinger 2001, 2014a). Also worth mentioning are his contributions to the debate about the problem of a "Median Empire" before Cyrus (see Chapter 25 The Median Dilemma). Beside his research on specific problems in Achaemenid history, Rollinger is involved in the field of "imperial studies" and emphasizes that with respect to the representation of kingship and system of administration, the Achaemenid Empire must be seen as a successor of the great ancient Near Eastern empires of the first millennium BCE (Rollinger 2014b).

Reinhold Bichler is especially devoted to Herodotus' and Ctesias' perceptions of the Achaemenids. The classicist contributed with innumerable works a better understanding of the literary goals of these two classical authors. A very useful tool for studying the Greek perception of foreign ethnics with a wide scope is his monograph *Herodotus' World* (Bichler 2001). He is interested in the ancient as well as in the modern perception of "Perserbilder," so

he is not only focused on the statements of Greek and Roman authors, he also works on the perception of the Achaemenids in nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholarship.

With Irene Madreiter, Innsbruck has a scholar who focuses on the oriental traditions in the Achaemenid Empire as well as their detection in the Greek historiography. With her monograph *Stereotypisierung – Idealisierung – Indifferenz* she was involved in carving out reasons for Greek stereotypes about the Persians, based on the narratives of Ctesias, Dinon, and Heracleides. Her conclusions lead her to use the term “metafiction” instead of “historical fiction” to describe the Greek imagination about Persia. The latter depends, according to her results, on the geographical distance of every single classical author from the heart of the empire (Madreiter 2012).

These scholars have connections with many different universities such as Helsinki, Kiel, Kassel, Marburg, and Basel. Thus the series *Classica et Orientalia* contains many international contributions. Vienna’s scientific presence is more philological. Fundamental for onomastic research is Manfred Mayrhofer’s *Iranisches Personennamenbuch* (IPNB), which can be seen as a benchmark in Iranian onomastic research. It is continued by the Vienna Iranian commission (Iranische Kommission Wien). It represents a significant work for studies in Old Persian as well for any research on the Achaemenid Empire and covers a wide range of secondary traditions. Mayrhofer should also be known through his collaboration with his teacher Wilhelm Brandenstein, with whom he published a *vademecum* of Old Persian grammar. Vienna has a name as an internationally connected center, for example there is a fertile collaboration with Rüdiger Schmitt, who still works within the framework of the IPNB.

Switzerland

Recent Swiss research is centered in Basel. Bruno Jacobs in particular has published plenty of articles, contributions, and monographs about historical as well archaeological aspects of the Achaemenids. With his dissertation he was engaged with Greek and Persian elements in the Lycian tomb art under Achaemenid rule. Through working out a deeper understanding for representative qualities of western Anatolian art, he was able to differentiate between local and foreign elements. The themes chosen by the Lycian elites depended on their social status and their political position. One of his results was that direct contact forced the transmission of themes, probably in the form of local emulations of goods brought by the Persians to Lycia, because Achaemenid art does not seem to be very influential (Jacobs 1987). With his habilitation treatise Jacobs carved out the administration of the satrapies under Darius III, based on a wide range of sources, in which

previous research had only a marginal interest. Through looking for a definition of individual ranks and positions in the imperial administration, he emphasized that not all satrapies had equal importance for the empire. He also emphasized that Alexander only slightly changed the Achaemenid administration system. This statement is also true for the early Achaemenid period, in which the satrapies mostly followed the schemes of the previous realms. Further, Jacobs was able to define the hierarchy of the higher ranks, but explicitly refused to discuss the lower ones. An important issue is his usage of classical sources. While in older research Hdt. III 87–89 was used as key witness for the reconstruction of the satrapal administration, Jacobs showed that the indigenous sources are more useful than Herodotus' account (Jacobs 1994). Further, in his articles he worked on a wide range of problems in Achaemenid ideology, religious thoughts and beliefs, archaeology, and Anatolia as a contact zone for the transmission of Iranian ideas and goods in the western parts of the empire. Within his interests on questioning the western traditions, he focused on the genealogy of Darius I, in which he pointed out that all kinds of evidence give us enough reasons to speak of continuities and discontinuities between the older and the younger lines of the Achaemenid dynasty, even the less discussed archaeological remains (Jacobs 2011). Jacobs occupied himself with the Achaemenid court and residences and emphasized that they can be best described with the term “Magnifizenz,” which means the pursuit of best possible quality in all facets. Classical authors reinterpreted this with their models of decadence and *tryphe* (Jacobs 2010). Aside from bringing new light on these questions, Jacobs published new contributions to historical and archaeological studies. While participating in the new discussion of violence in antiquity, he concluded that the lack of cruelty in Achaemenid art arose from an absence of will to present it. No Achaemenid piece of art shows Persian interaction in the context of cruel or violent scenes, contrary to the accounts of classical authors (Jacobs 2009).

Worth mentioning is G. Walser with his monograph about Greek and Persian relations in the time before Alexander, on which he gave an overview on the basis of 15 case studies. He argued that the literary picture of Greco-Persian conflict was something of a fiction because in reality Greek society was more liberal concerning the Persians. His claim that there was not a big difference between the two ethnic groups attracted critics (Walser 1984). He also studied the relief of delegations at Persepolis with the procedure of the audience by the Great King (Walser 1965, 1966). He was responsible for the posthumous publication of Ernst Herzfeld's enormous geographical and ethnographic studies (Herzfeld 1968).

Aside from historical research on the Achaemenids, Christof Uehlinger is examining the spreading of religious motifs and themes in Palestine (Uehlinger 1999).

Italy

Giovanni Lanfranchi's research as an Assyriologist on the Achaemenids is mostly intended to detect ancient oriental traditions in their kingship. Especially in the case of Ctesias' accounts, he found out that his *Assyrika* reflects the historical memory of the Assyrian Empire, which Lanfranchi exemplified by showing terms of Assyrian tradition in Ctesias' statements (Lanfranchi 2011). He emphasized that the Zagros people formed part of the imperial elite and conserved the Assyrian ideology until the Achaemenid period.⁶ As another Italian scholar, who worked in the USA, Gherardo Gnoli is engaged in research on Zarathustra as an historical person, which brought him many critics. He dated the prophet roughly to the period 618–541 BCE, refusing to include attempts for pre-historical dating. In his view, the Avesta is not an adequate source for the west Iranian peoples because the inhabitants of different parts of Iran were exposed to different influences (Gnoli 2000). This aspect let him localize the transmission of Assyrian ideas such as imperial ideology in the Zagros. The academic works of A.V. Rossi and G.P. Basello are of utmost importance for the study of the Elamite and Old Persian language.

Research by Theme and Type of Publication

Another way of looking at the history of Achaemenid studies is through research into specific topics or types of evidence. While modern research into Achaemenid studies attempts to use a wide variety of evidence, most researchers have one or two areas of special interest, and different sub-fields have developed in different directions. Notable journals, series of monographs, conferences, and online publications also deserve mention.

Research into Specific Classical Authors

Achaemenid studies has always been influenced by changes in the understanding of the main classical authors. Many papers at the Achaemenid History Workshops were sharply critical of the Greek sources and the narratives which they had inspired. An alternate view places more blame on their modern interpreters and looks for reflections of Achaemenid realities within Greek and Latin narratives. Theoretical approaches about combinations of classical sources and ancient Near Eastern sources are provided by the works of the Belgian Marc Van De Mieroop (1997, 1999).

The Persae of Aeschylus

Aeschylus' *Persae* is the only surviving Greek tragedy with historical background on the Persian Wars. Because of its tragic report of the naval battle at

Salamis 480 BCE, older research was more interested in using the tragedy for modern ends than in studying it in its historical context (Grethlein 2007 presents an overview of that tragedy's political relevance in the twentieth century). But it earned significance for Achaemenid studies because of its view of the Persians. The commentary of Jurenka (1903) is exemplary for an early detection of its equivocal images of Persia. The contrast between the fatherly Darius and the despotic Xerxes, with its parallels to Hdt. 3.89, in which Darius is characterized as a father for the Persians and Cambyses as a *despotes*, as well as the evocation of compassion for the defeated Persians, are also interesting. Inspired by his observation, Hall (1989) suggested in the late 1980s that *Persae* should be seen as a main source for the "invention of the barbarian," with regard to the attempt to establish a Greek identity (contra Pelling 1997). This leads to another question on Aeschylus' tragedy: does the tragedy contain any useful historical information for the reconstruction of the battle of Salamis? For example, the Iranian names in Aeschylus are mostly authentic: every name can be confirmed in other Greek authors or by ancient Near Eastern traditions (Schmitt 1978). Also the Persian weapons mentioned in the tragedy seem to be used by the Achaemenid army (Kranz 1988: pp. 89–90). Other scholars emphasize the Greek perspective of Aeschylus by examining distortions of ancient Near Eastern sources. From this point of view, Aeschylus' Persian court is also an *interpretatio graeca*, with hardly any authentic information (Broadhead 1960; Hutzefeld 1999; Harrison 2000). To sum up this dispute, Aeschylus' account provides us partly "authentic" information about the Persians, but Greek resentments against the Achaemenids can be detected: the author provided a view of the Persians which is deeply influenced by the discourses his time. It influenced Herodotus (Parker 2007) and possibly other authors. Thus, the tragedy cannot be used to prove the decline of the Achaemenid Empire under Xerxes I (cf. Briant 2002: p. 517).

Herodotus

The range of publications involving Herodotus' perception of the Achaemenid Empire is so large that this chapter can offer only a short overview of the main paradigms. An introduction and overview are provided by Bichler and Rollingier (2000), where also an exhaustive list of literature can be found.

Because of the orientation of the *Histories* as an investigation into why the Hellenes and the Barbarians waged war against each other (Hdt. *Proem.*), Herodotus' work can be viewed as *the* source for classical times concerning the ancient Near East (for further discussion see Chapter 14 Greek and Latin Sources). So it isn't astonishing that Herodotus' work is a central theme in research on the Achaemenids.

But using Herodotus' accounts for writing a history of the Achaemenids is deeply linked with the long-standing discussion about the reliability of his work. That discussion is forced by Herodotus' quotation and use of sources, which gave him the title *pater historiae*, or proto-historian, or even liar, depending on which label one prefers (see the different paradigms in Jacoby 1913; Momigliano 1958; Evans 1968). Still famous is Fehling's (1971; contra Jacoby 1913) perception that Herodotus' source references are all invented as well as fictionalized. Although Fehling's position can be classified as extreme, it remained very influential but also controversial (for criticism see Prichett 1993). Aside this discussion other scholars showed a different approach by trying to understand the literary techniques of the ancient author, beginning in the late 1960s with American publications, up to the French François Hartog (1988). The latter shows how Herodotus mirrors his surrounding environment in his presentation of the Scythians. In this tradition stands Erbse (1992), who views Herodotus more as a *littérateur* than an accurate historian by underlining his *Kompositionskunst* (art of composing a narrative). How the non-Greek *ethnoi* are perceived in the *Histories* is shown by Bichler (2001), who also emphasizes that their author used patterns to describe foreign peoples, their cultures, and lands. An up-to-date discussion of Herodotus and his sources is provided in the anthology of Dunsch and Ruffing (2014).

Aside these discussions, which were led mainly by classicists, some other scholars with a background in Classics and Assyriology sharpened our view on Herodotus' presentation of the ancient Near East and its inhabitants. In a few cases in the *Histories*, where the issues of the intellectual heritage of the ancient Near East is detectable, researchers showed how Herodotus was aware of foreign traditions and how he created a new narrative out of them (Rollinger 2004, 2014c).

Concerning the long ongoing question of Herodotus' presence in the Near East, we need to differ between strategies of literary credence and accurate depictions. Because his description of Babylon can be compared with the vast corpus of indigenous sources, it gives us access to his methods as a writer. The Babylonian *logos* also happens to be a key passage for Herodotus' view of the Achaemenids. Herodotus implies that he saw various things in Babylonia without quite claiming eyewitness knowledge (*opsis*). Newer research combined Herodotus' point of view and indigenous sources and further underlined that the so-called "Babylonian logos" is more a partisan Greek view of the ancient Near East than a travelogue (esp. Rollinger 1993; Henkelman et al. 2011). According to the *Histories*, Babylon was in decline under the rule of the Achaemenids. However, this reflects Herodotus' perception of the Achaemenids as tyrants, as can be seen in his figure of Xerxes (cf. Chapter 36 Babylon). Nevertheless, the discussion of Herodotus' travels is still a kind of political issue. For some scholars, what Herodotus says

about his travels must be believed, and Herodotus as good as says that he saw things in Babylon. But the compelling discussions of indigenous sources (especially Rollinger 2014; cf. further Wiesehöfer 1999; Jacobs 2010; Heller 2010: p. 53) and the awareness of Herodotus' ability for literary composition showed that Herodotus used *opsis* to give specific statements credibility (Bichler 2014).

Two more examples concerning the Achaemenids can exemplify how important the way of modern interpretation of Herodotus' accounts can be. Modern scholarship suggests that contemporary history should play a role in the reading of the *Histories*. Once this view had become accepted, it laid the foundations for a deeper understanding of Herodotus, and his work was seen in context of the author's own time. For example, Kai Ruffing (2011) showed that Herodotus' description of the taxes established by Darius I reflects Athenian taxation; the putative *interpretatio graeca* of Achaemenid affairs was in fact a critique of the Athenian Empire.

The next example is symptomatic for the ambivalent use of Herodotus' accounts for writing a history on the Achaemenids. The interpretation of the so-called *nomoi* list in Hdt. 3.89–94 at the same time mentioned reform of the empire by Darius I and gave birth to a huge scholarly dispute (see the overview on the main paradigms in Jacobs 1994: pp. 9–29, 2003). Jacobs (1994) highlighted that we are dealing with a construct that we cannot use for conclusions on the administration of the Achaemenid Empire. The Old Persian inscriptions are the only reliable sources. Thus, the reform of the empire under Darius I must also be seen as a construct.

But in other cases, Herodotus is more in accordance with indigenous sources. The parallels between the Behistun inscription as the *res gestae* of Darius I and Herodotus' account of Darius' accession to the throne especially fascinated many classicists as well as scholars of ancient Near Eastern studies (Wiesehöfer 1978 with an overview on related studies).

Also in other matters the verdict on Herodotus' account on the Achaemenid Empire turned out to be ambiguous and fierce debates continue (Bichler 2014). Recent research is leading to a new understanding of Herodotus as a highly complex and ambivalent writer who reflected Greek sentiments about the ancient Near East. For example, David Asheri states in the latest available commentary on the *Histories*: "Herodotus was well aware that despotism was also a Greek phenomenon and that love of freedom could also be found among barbarians" (Asheri et al. 2007: p. 45). Modern scholarship often concentrated on such typical prejudices of single members of the Achaemenid dynasty, based on Herodotus' narratives, like his account of Xerxes as a despot (cf. Chapter 110 The Achaemenid Empire: Realm of Tyranny or Founder of Human Rights?; Rollinger 2011); the latter is a good example of Herodotus' influence on the Alexander historians.

How the academic paradigms of Herodotus' view on the Persians changed in time can be seen by a look at the work of Reinhardt. His aim was to detect ancient Near Eastern stories by looking for those that fit a specific pattern: harem scenes, stories about eunuchs, and other details qualified stories as originally "oriental." That view is symptomatic for its time, but writing a history of the ancient Near East based on Herodotus' accounts was never considered to be methodologically unsound. For an up-to-date examination of Herodotus' view on the Achaemenid Empire see the exhaustive anthology *Herodotus and the Persian Empire* (Rollinger et al. 2011).

Modern research swings between identifying comprehensible elements and Near Eastern motifs and Greek resentments, which were projected into the Achaemenid Empire. For example, the *šar pūhi*-rituals (Madreiter 2005), or in general the Neo-Assyrian background of the Achaemenid dynasty based on Herodotus' accounts (Rollinger 2014a, c; Jacobs and Rollinger 2010; Haubold 2013), speak for the reception of ancient Near Eastern elements and motifs by Herodotus. The biggest issue in this direction of research is the question of the so-called "channels of transmission." The discovery of versions of the royal inscriptions in Aramaic at Elephantine is relevant to this question. But beside some evidence of communication networks to the Aegean world, in general this discussion touches on the question about the travels of Herodotus; a dispute which cannot be discussed in full here. Some case studies argue that Herodotus' statements that he had seen and heard things are literary mechanisms, and that "they describe Herodotus' enquiry and the nature of the knowledge collected by him in a way which his audience was expected to find realistic" (Luraghi 2001: p. 160; an example of such a case study is Rollinger 2004). Whether the information came partly from local traditions or from direct contact with persons from the ancient Near East (Vlassopoulos 2013) is still a matter of dispute.

The result is that we must deal with partial authentic information of the ancient Near Eastern cultures, which were integrated into the author's vision of history, reflecting his worldview. Pierre Briant brought the problem of an accurate interpretation of our classical sources to a point: "That is, in reading classical authors, we must distinguish the Greek interpretive coating from the Achaemenid nugget of information" (Briant 2002: p. 256). Recent research is trending to deal with specific topics of the *Histories*, like Herodotus' presentation of the Achaemenid court (Jacobs and Rollinger 2010).

Ctesias

Research on Ctesias focuses on two central problems: his work is conveyed only through fragments and the reliability of his accounts is hard to estimate. In the early nineteenth century scholars tried to collect and interpret the

surviving traces of the author. Fascinated by the stories about the Persian court with its intrigues, Ctesias' *Persika* was used as a fundamental source for Persian decadence. The reliability of his accounts was debated, but from the premise that he was (or should have been) a historian like Thucydides or Polybius.

The leading study in this time was written by K.-L. Blum (1836), who offered a compromise on the question of Ctesias' reliability. For him, Ctesias was following written sources and thus he cannot be dismissed as an inventor of implausible oriental tales (Blum 1836: pp. 146–147). About 90 years later, F. Jacoby (1922) stated in his article that Ctesias misunderstood the craft of the historian's work and missed the chance to collect information on the Persian empire as a member of the court. Jacoby's harsh criticism is representative of the early twentieth-century scholarship, in which Ctesias' work was deemed as a prototype for the later historical romance.

This notion changed in modern Achaemenid studies, so the two leading editions of Ctesias' fragments are trying to understand the literary dimension of the *Persika*. The most recent one with an English translation was published by Jan Stronk (2010). In his detailed introduction to Ctesias' work, he gives his opinion that Ctesias must be classified as an author between historian and poet, by stating that "the possibility that the historicity, or rather accuracy, of Ctesias' account increases the more he approaches his own times ..., is clearly present" (Stronk 2010: p. 39). Aside Stronk's edition, Dominique Lenfant released an edition of the fragments with a French translation, which replaced the editions of the twentieth century and became a benchmark (Lenfant 2004). That Ctesias' *Persika* is the rage can be seen in the quantity of relevant publications: Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones and J. Robson recently published an English translation of the fragments and the testimonia with introduction. Llewellyn-Jones especially claims that Ctesias himself will not be, and thus cannot be, described as writing a single genre (Llewellyn-Jones and Robson 2010: p. 79). In contrast, other scholars are still trying to discuss the literary genre, for instance Bruno Bleckmann (2006), Tim Whitemarsh (2008), between historiography or historical romance. In the past few years the works of Stronk, Lenfant, and Llewellyn-Jones have greatly enlarged the available literature and called for a serious consideration of what Ctesias was trying to achieve. Like Herodotus he received much attention in studies of individual problems. In particular, the critical discussion of Ctesias' multitudinous court stories is part of the scientific discourse on the Achaemenid court (Jacobs and Rollinger 2010). Selected aspects of his work were discussed in the anthology *Ctesias' World*. The broad focus of this volume offers the treatment of specific passages of Ctesias' work as well as it examines questions about its historical and literary dimensions (Wiesehöfer et al. 2011). Also, the image of Persia by Ctesias, which shows us despotic oriental rulers and a decadent court society, was recognized as a *topos* and criticized (Bichler and Rollinger 2002).

Despite this literary turn, the quantity and quality of the fragments are still under discussion. Nicholas of Damascus, Diodorus, Plutarchus, Photius, and many other ancient authors used Ctesias' work as a source. But often it's not clear whether their works contain pieces of the *Persika* or they are related to one of Ctesias' contemporaries such as Dinon of Colophon or Heracleides. Hence the number of fragments can differ by editions. Highly recommendable are the works of Dominique Lenfant. As well as her edition of the fragments, which contains a huge introduction to the author and his works as well as other aspects such as ambivalent treatment of the work in scholarship, she worked on many problems in the relationship between Ctesias and Persia. For an onomastic examination of Ctesias' accounts, the works of J. Auberger, L. Tuero, and Stefan Zawadzki, and especially Rüdiger Schmitt, are very elaborate (Schmitt 1979, 2006). Their offerings prove that Ctesias' works contain authentic Iranian names.

Several of these researchers determined that Ctesias' *Assyrika* reflects the historical memory of the Assyrian Empire, which Lanfranchi (2011) exemplified by showing terms from the Assyrian tradition in Ctesias' statements.

For further reading, the bibliography of the anthology *The Achaemenid Court* is highly recommended (Berktoed et al. 2011).

Research on Xenophon

Xenophon is a crucial source for the Achaemenid Empire, and many researchers address his treatment of the Persians. Classicists have long debated whether he was a simple soldier (whose gaps and disagreements with other sources were due to carelessness) or an estoeric writer who masked his manipulations behind plain language (famously advocated by the German émigré Leo Strauss in 1939). He addresses the Persians in works ranging from memoirs to histories to Socratic dialogues. Modern studies often focus on a single work, such as the commentaries on the *Anabasis* by Otto Lendle (1995) and Jan P. Stronk (1995). Hans Rudolph Breitenbach's RE article (1966) contains detailed comments and bibliographies on each of Xenophon's works. In recent decades, Christopher Tuplin (Liverpool) has written many articles on Xenophon's treatment of the Achaemenid Empire. His study of the responsibility of the satraps to maintain soldiers (Tuplin 1987) confronted one of several cases where Xenophon addresses the same topic in similar but not identical terms in several works. Vincent Azoulay (e.g. 2000) has also addressed the Achaemenidica in Xenophon as part of his wider interest in Xenophon and Greek history. George Cawkwell's work on Xenophon as narrative historian (e.g. 2005) is influenced by criticisms of Xenophon from within both Classics and Achaemenid studies.

The *Cyropaedia* poses special problems. While it has always attracted readers who read it literally, over time the debate has focused on whether the Near Eastern elements are central or mere “decor” (Tuplin 1990) pasted atop political and military lessons for a Greek audience. In 1975 Wolfgang Knauth suggested that the *Cyropaedia* drew from a genuine Persian “Mirror for Princes,” although this did not meet universal approval. Arthur Emanuel Christensen (1936), A.M. Pizzagali (1942), and Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1985) entertained the idea that the deathbed speech attributed to Cyrus drew on Iranian traditions visible in the *Shahnameh* or the inscriptions of Darius. Early researchers often took it for granted that stories about eunuchs and doomed lovers were “oriental,” and while researchers in the 1980s and 1990s were not so sure, in recent years European scholars have developed this idea further. Simo Parpola, an Assyriologist, also found parallels between the names and customs in Neo-Assyrian sources and those in the *Cyropaedia* (Parpola 2003). This is certainly in keeping with the recent tendency to look at the Achaemenid Empire as less “Iranian” than “Near Eastern.” The controversial last chapter (by another, later writer?) was once widely cited as evidence for the decline of the empire, but now is more often used to understand Greek ideology; the same could be said of the pan-Hellenic passages in Xenophon’s other works.

Research on Diodorus

Scholars in Achaemenid studies frequently cite Diodorus but rarely dedicate studies to him and his work. The thesis of Christian August Volquardsen that books 11–16 are summaries of Ephorus of Cyme (Volquardsen 1868) has been challenged by researchers in the USA and Canada who argue that Diodorus chose and reworked his sources to meet the needs of a Greek intellectual during the Roman civil wars. Jonas Palm in Sweden opened this debate with a book on Diodorus’ prose style (Palm 1955). However, research on Ctesias still treats much of Diodorus’ book 2 as a fragment of Cnidan. Studies of specific historical episodes often contain a few remarks on Diodorus, his sources, and his credibility. Today, two works in many volumes are in progress. The Budé edition of Diodorus contains a new text, translation, introduction, and commentary by French scholars such as François Chamoux, Claude Vial, and Paul Goukowski (cf. Vial 1977). A team of Italian scholars including Dino Ambaglio, Franca Landucci, and Luigi Bravi is working on a commentary to Diodorus with the press Vita e Pensiero (e.g. Ambaglio 2008). Thus far, research into Diodorus has not been as much affected by the rise of Achaemenid studies as research into some other authors (but see Stronk 2017).

Lives of Alexander

Alexander as a historical person and even Alexander's relationship to the Achaemenid dynasty have been the subject of multitudinous international academic works. Scholarship was and still is oriented toward the "Alexander historians" and their successors as a broad corpus of information on the Achaemenid dynasty. Thus research is divided according to different themes. Due to the lack of space, only a small number of important researches can be sketched here. In a detailed historiographical study about Darius III, Pierre Briant freed Darius III from his position as a footnote in the history of Alexander and deconstructed the dominant view on him as a stereotypical despot and loser (Briant 2015). One of the main research interests of Sabine Müller are the topoi of ancient historiography among the Achaemenids. In many publications she discusses decadence and luxury as tropes in Greek and Roman literature (Müller 2007).

In contrast to Curtius and Arrian, the Alexander Romance never found much favor in scholarship as a citable source for the Achaemenids. Richard Stoneman's work on the romances as sources for the reception of Alexander's deeds in late antiquity and middle age offers a huge overview on every specific theme of this topic (Stoneman 1991).

Research on Plutarch

Plutarch's life of Artaxerxes, as well as some other of his *bioi paralleloi*, have been broadly discussed in Achaemenid studies. The following overview gives only a short bibliography of recent works on the topic Plutarch and the Persians.

Christopher Pelling stressed that Herodotus was as a source of "generic malleability" (able to be reformed to suit different needs) for Plutarch. Rather than copy Herodotus' picture of the Achaemenids, Plutarch combines it with the literary images of Parthians of his own time (Pelling 2007: p. 157). According to J. Mossman, who examined the literary dimension of Plutarch's life of Artaxerxes, the protagonist was viewed through Greek lenses and was set into a discourse about Hellenism and barbarism (Mossman 2010). Useful is the latest commentary on the *vita Artaxerxou* presented by Carsten Binder (Binder 2008).

Minor Authors

European scholars working on the tacticians, the collections of strategems (Frontinus, Polyaeus), and the manuals of military engineering (such as Nicholas Sekunda) confine their remarks on the Persians to brief suggestions.

The collections of “interesting passages,” such as Aelian, tend to be studied one episode at a time by Achaemenid historians.

The life of Datames by Cornelius Nepos has attracted a handful of studies ranging from the early works by Walther Judeich (RE s.v. Datames, Judeich 1892) to an article by Nicholas Sekunda (1988b).

Archaeological Research

Archaeological research in the territories of the former Achaemenid Empire flourished during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Due to the political and military situation, archaeological research is not possible in all parts of the empire today. Reports from European travelers in the Near East were and are still very helpful for Achaemenid archaeology. Thanks to such reports, the hot spots for excavations, the big residences in Susa and Persepolis, were detected. The latter was excavated systematically for the first time during the 1930s by the German Ernst Herzfeld. From the outbreak of the Second World War Iranian archaeologists were involved in the further documentations. Susa was discovered in 1851 by the Briton W. Kennett Loftus. After that mainly French teams were excavating the palaces, with Jacques de Morgan and Roman Ghirshman leading the project, with interruptions. J. Boardman worked on western influences in Achaemenid palatial art. He emphasized the marks of activities of Greek workforces during the construction (Boardman 2000). Recent research on the palaces has been carried out by Rémy Boucharlat. This scholar is at the peak of French archaeological research in general. Very useful are the proceedings of the conference “L’archéologie de l’empire achéménide: nouvelles recherches,” which give an overview on recent projects and research activities (Briant and Boucharlat 2005).

Aside the many ongoing projects in modern Iran, a great deal of work seeks to describe the cultural interactions between the Achaemenid Empire and the adjoining territories. One remarkable study in cultural interaction was carried out by Margaret Miller. She examined the phenomena of the so-called “Perserie” in Athens during the fifth century BCE and argued that some parts of Athenian society were more receptive of Persian dress than others, so that Persian costume became a kind of status symbol for the upwardly mobile (Miller 1997). This work can stand for many others, which showed that the classical texts often present an ideologically exaggerated view of the Persian Empire. Beside this classic, the recent anthology of S. Darbandi and A. Zournatzi offers new perspectives on the cross-cultural relationship between Persia and the Aegean world (Darbandi and Zournatzi 2008).

Anatolia also received much attention as a space where local styles were mixed with Persian-style elements. For instance, Bruno Jacobs and C. Draycott

are scholars who work on iconographical interactions between Anatolian and Persian styles. A thematically wide-ranged anthology is presented by the senior curator of the British Museum, St John Simpson (Curtis and Simpson 2010). Many parts of this book address the archaeology of empire, and it can be used as a bibliography on specific themes.

For results of the latest European respectively European and Non-European research projects in Achaemenid archaeology, the following overview presents only a foray through this vivid subject. The interaction between local traditions and Persian “imperial” influences in the material culture of Anatolia, the south Caucasus, and Iran is the main topic of Askold Ivantchik and Vakhtang Licheli (Ivantchik and Licheli 2007). The Italian archaeologist P. Callieri is known for recent Italian–Iranian projects in Fars province (Chaverdi and Callieri 2012). A current German excavation in Azerbaijan discovered a palace in Karačamirli. This discovery will soon be published. As further reading with references to bibliographies David Stronach’s lemma in the *Encyclopaedia Iranica* is very useful (Stronach 1986).

Numismatic Research

Numismatics have been part of Achaemenid studies since the pioneering catalogs of Barclay Vincent Head (1877) and Ernest Babelon (1893). Yannick Lintz has recently discussed the history of research into the “archer coins” (Lintz 2010), and Chapter 57 of this volume (Royal Coinage) discusses the state of the field. Some numismatists have worked from national capitals with their coin collections (Michael Alam [Vienna, the author of the standard catalog (Alam 2012)], Ian Carradice [British Museum]), others in private collections (Leo Mildenburg [Zurich, the author of another overview]), and yet others as archaeologists in the field (Ernst Hertefeld). Coins have traditionally been tied into debates about iconography and ideology, and attempts to reconstruct weights and measures (see the chapter by A.D.H. Bivar in Gershevitch 1985) but also into the questions of whether the Persians oppressed their subjects by taking silver out of circulation, and whether the invention of coins or Alexander’s minting of his looted treasures led to significant economic changes.⁷ On this topic, researchers looking forward from the Neo-Babylonian period and backward from the Hellenistic period often have very different perspectives.

Journals and Serial Publications

Several important journals and serial publications contain works by European scholars of the Achaemenid Empire. The series *Achaemenid Research on Texts and Archaeology*, or ARTA, has appeared irregularly since 2002 and is hosted on

the Achemenet website (see under Online Resources). The open-access journal *Nouvelles Assyriologiques Brèves et Utilitaires* (NABU) contains a reasonable number of articles on the Neo-Babylonian, Persian, and Hellenistic periods. It began publication in 1987. Less specialized, the journals *Historia* (political and military topics, with its *Historia Einzelschriften*), *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran* (and its *Ergänzungsbande*), *Iran*, *Iranica Antiqua*, and *Iraq* have published many articles on Achaemenid topics by scholars from western Europe.

The series *Achaemenid History* from NINO began as the proceedings of the Achaemenid History Workshops but proceeded to publish monographs and Festschriften related to Achaemenid studies. The prolific series *Alter Orient und Altes Testament* from Ugarit-Verlag includes many volumes on Achaemenid topics, most often by scholars from the German-speaking countries. Beginning in 2011, the *Classica et Orientalia* series from Harrasowitz Verlag has published monographs and conference proceedings on the Achaemenid Empire and the Greek writers who described it. It has been particularly popular with scholars from Innsbruck.

Online Resources

European scholars have produced a number of important online resources on the Achaemenid Empire. Jona Lendering's encyclopedia Livius.org has hosted articles on the Achaemenid Empire since its foundation in 1996 (<http://www.livius.org/>). Resources include maps of the different stages of the construction of Persepolis, photos of the major archaeological sites, transcriptions, and translations of the royal inscriptions and some astronomical diaries, and articles on individual lands. Pierre Briant helped to organize Achemenet, probably the most important online resource for Achaemenid studies (<http://www.achemenet.com/>).

Achemenet is loosely divided into two sections, a virtual museum and a collection of written sources. The former includes photos and drawings of a great many artifacts carefully organized by keyword. Online publication enables the organizers to avoid some of the physical and financial limitations of print publication. The other section provides a directory of different resources and a guide to new publications, conferences, and workshops. Achemenet itself hosts transcriptions of many documents from the Achaemenid period and two online journals, NABU and ARTA. Another website, *Persepolis: a virtual reconstruction*, has hosted artists' reconstructions of Achaemenid Persepolis since 2003 (<http://persepolis3d.com/>). Equally specialized is *Commodity Prices in Babylon, 385–61 BC* by R.J. van der Spek (<http://www.iisg.nl/hpw/babylon.php>). Van der Spek's spreadsheet and introduction make these sources available to economic historians who do not often work with cuneiform sources.

The online edition of the *Encyclopaedia Iranica* makes a valuable resource available outside of a handful of libraries (<http://www.iranicaonline.org/>). The website of the Melammu project provides a searchable bibliography and a directory to online resources for all aspects of the ancient Near East, including many on the Achaemenid period (<http://www.aakkl.helsinki.fi/melammu/index.html>).

Conferences and Exhibitions

Since the Achaemenid History Workshops, conferences have been central to Achaemenid studies in Europe. Several have been associated with museum exhibitions. The “Forgotten Empire: The World of Ancient Persia” exhibit at the British Museum from September 2005 to January 2006 produced a conference, a catalog with lengthy essays, and a volume of conference proceedings (Curtis and Tallis 2005; Curtis and Simpson 2010). In 2013 the Cyrus Cylinder was exhibited in several US museums under the joint sponsorship of the British Museum and the Iran Heritage Foundation. The exhibitions were accompanied by several local events and a short volume (Finkel 2013). The Melammu Symposia, begun in 1998 and revived in 2013, address the role of Mesopotamia in the wider ancient world. The Symposia seek to encourage communication between scholars with different specialties. The Imperium et Officium project in Vienna (2009–2014) considered the Achaemenid Empire in the context of imperialism from the Bronze Age into the early Islamic period, while the conference in Padua in 2001 on “Continuity of Empire” focused on its relationship with earlier kingdoms.

New workshops show a tendency for interests in special aspects within the history of the Achaemenids. In 2016 a workshop was held in Münster, focused on the policy of religion in the Achaemenid Empire. International and well-respected participants such as Pierre Briant, Amélie Kuhrt, Jozef Wiesehöfer, and Bruno Jacobs discussed the role of local sanctuaries in the policy of religion of the Achaemenids. The proceedings will soon be published. Other conferences focus on particular regions, such as “Achaemenid Culture and Local traditions in Anatolia, Southern Caucasus, and Iran” (held in Georgia in 2006, proceedings in Ivantchik and Licheli (2007)).

Conclusion

We are sorry that we have not been able to mention every important scholar who works on the Achaemenids. But this very fact shows that Achaemenid studies has become a popular research subject for classicists as well for specialists in the ancient Near East. It is a popularity that the subject truly deserves.

NOTES

- 1 For a list of editions see Lewis, “Brissonius: De Regio Persarum Principatu Libri Tres,” p. 70. The following is based on the 1710 edition available at <http://digi.bib.uni-mannheim.de/ubmadesb/content/titleinfo/50269>.
- 2 Burn 1962: pp. 91–93 (“Altogether there is much to be said for Beloch’s and Olmstead’s bold theory, that it really was Bardiya, the son of Cyrus, who rebelled successfully against his brother with the support of the Magi”), 96 (“it is fair to remember that many of the defeated must have trusted in God also”).
- 3 While specialists in ancient history found Hanson’s ideas about the classical Greeks much more interesting than his remarks on other cultures, many specialists in modern history embraced them (e.g. John Keegan, Geoffrey Parker).
- 4 In his chapter on King and Court we count 22 comparisons to other cultures aside from terms such as harem, safari, lesè-maisté, which suggest a parallel without developing it. Of these, fifteen refer to later Parthians, Persians, or Turks, three to earlier Egyptians, Hittites, or Mesopotamians, and six to European peoples (several comparisons invoke cultures from more than one of these groups).
- 5 An intense discussion of this topic can be found in the chapter “Archaeological research” in this contribution.
- 6 Lanfranchi 2003: p. 117: “This is the road which was followed by Assyrian imperial ideology and Assyrian imperial symbolism and which was preserved in good measure in later periods such as the Achaemenid: it was a road totally internal to the empire, with the Zagros elites forming a substantial and high level of the imperial elite.”
- 7 Briant 2002: p. 801; someone who wishes to find the Assyriological perspective could begin with the term “silverization” and the names R. van der Spek and G. van Driel.

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CHAPTER 107

The USA

Margaret Cool Root

Introduction

This brief history of Achaemenid Studies in North America embraces members of the 1920s–1930s’ intellectual diaspora as well as others who either moved permanently to North America, had sustained shared residence there and abroad, or reverse-migrated. Scholarship of such individuals that is considered here focuses on work gestated and/or published while within the North American context. Works cited can reflect only selected core trends and moments in original scholarship (often through studies that incorporate analytical reviews of earlier material). Our temporal parameters concentrate from the mid-nineteenth century to the early twenty-first century. The Holy Land and the Bible loomed large in the early American imagination and pursuit of antiquity (Kuklick 1996). Theological seminaries and colleges developed as early as the mid-seventeenth century. But the academic study of the ancient Near East developed only gradually. The first inter-institutional organization relevant to our topic was the American Oriental Society (founded in 1842). A desire to materialize a biblical past motivated the first North American Near Eastern field projects – dovetailing with eagerness to participate in the international race to acquire papyri and cuneiform tablets. The University of Pennsylvania (Penn) expedition to Nippur, Iraq (beginning in 1888) was the first North American excavation in the Near East. As we shall see below, this initiative had an important impact on Achaemenid Studies.

With this academic turn, modern university structures – particularly in the USA – developed into autonomous discipline-based departments defensive of their prerogatives and budgets. European émigrés of the 1920s and 1930s encountered an environment very different from what they were accustomed to (Panofsky in *Further Reading*: Crawford 1953). Discipline- and geography-based fiefdoms continue to pose challenges for US-based Achaemenid Studies.

Language/Text/History

Projects in primary text documentation and translation for wide accessibility have been crucial to the multidisciplinary growth of Achaemenid Studies because the multicultural expanse of the Achaemenid Empire engages so many text traditions.

Babylonian, Elamite, Old Persian

In 1893, Penn's excavations at Nippur yielded a major corpus of Persian Period Babylonian tablets: an archive of documents from the land-management firm of the Murašû family, many of which came to Philadelphia. Selected texts were published with remarkable speed in 1898, although providing only hand copies and transliterations without translation. North American scholars henceforth have published in translation many isolated tablets and small collections of Late Babylonian documents including Persian Period material. Topical interpretive studies have also routinely included Persian Period documents, ranging from political history/chronology to social implications of language adaptations, to labor, economics, transport, marriage and other contracts, and cults. A social-economic analysis of the Murašû texts (Stolper 1985) is one monographic highlight out of many.

The 1920s yielded English translations of corpora of Sumerian and then Assyrian precursors to the Achaemenid imperial texts, followed by the Toronto Royal Inscriptions of Neo-Assyria Project (now based at Penn). The 1930s yielded similar initiatives on pre-Achaemenid Mesopotamian royal correspondence. Recent North American scholarship analytically examining epistolary literary and diplomatic traditions in pre-Persian Greater Mesopotamia contributes to a renewed interest in Achaemenid evidence.

North American studies of monumental Achaemenid Period cuneiform inscriptions start with A.V.W. Jackson. He ascended Mount Bisitun in 1903 to check the 1844 readings of the Old Persian by the British H.C. Rawlinson (Jackson 1906). At mid-century, G.G. Cameron then mounted two extended Bisitun campaigns. R.G. Kent's influential study and translation of all the Old Persian monumental inscriptions (1950/53) was aided in its second edition

by Cameron's new readings, as was the 1978 *Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum* (CII) edition of the Babylonian text by E. von Voigtlander. Cameron also rendered translations of the trilingual Darius inscriptions on the south face of the Persepolis Takht. The full 1985 CII edition of the Old Persian (DPd-e) was prepared by A.Sh. Shahbazi. Combined efforts on these and other monumental imperial Achaemenid cuneiform texts have enabled interpretive inquiry by Achaemenid specialists across the disciplines.

Discovery of the Persepolis Fortification and Treasury archives by American excavations in the 1930s pushed Achaemenid Elamite into prominence. The Treasury texts record payments for labor and illuminate internal Persepolis administrative personnel and processes within a close circle (Cameron 1948). The much larger corpus of Fortification texts records disbursements of food commodities to a wide range of individuals (and animals) drawing upon imperial stores across the Persepolis region in relation to diverse activities (Hallock 1969). Presenting particular challenges of vocabulary, Hallock's willingness to publish translations (however tentative) of 2087 of these documents was massively important to Achaemenid Studies.

Aramaic and Hebrew Bible Studies

Journalist and Egyptological enthusiast C.E. Wilbour (1833–1896) purchased a group of Aramaic documents in Aswan: the first Elephantine papyri to reach scholarly attention. Including letters and contracts, they illuminate life in a Persian Period Jewish military settlement at the first cataract of the Nile (Porten 1968; Azzoni 2013). From Palestine/Israel, a small corpus of looted private legal papyri were found in a cave at Wadi Daliyeh, secured in the 1960s by Frank M. Cross (Gropp 2001).

From Iran, North American scholars have been charged with studying the ink notations on ritual stoneware excavated from the Persepolis Treasury (published in 1970 by R.A. Bowman) and the hundreds of Aramaic texts inscribed in ink on a subset of Persepolis Fortification tablets (Azzoni in Further Reading; Briant, Henkelman, and Stolper 2008).

The *Journal of Biblical Literature* from its inception in 1881 encouraged historical-literary approaches to the Hebrew Bible. Persian Period biblical scholarship thrives, from introductory books (Yamauchi 1990) to specialized studies of temple-imperial interfaces in Judah (Fried 2004). Analyses of *Chronicles* in an Achaemenid context (Dixon 2009) exemplify nuanced efforts. Commentaries on *Esther* – paradigmatic biblical reflection on the Achaemenid Empire – chart shifting North American methodologies beginning with Paton (1908) and moving into important late twentieth-century applications of gender studies and feminist theory by Adele Berlin and others.

Indo-Iranian/Avestan

The study of Sanskrit emerged slowly beginning in the late eighteenth century. W.D. Whitney's late nineteenth-century grammar was the first by an American. In the closing decade of that century, A.V.W. Jackson established significant breadth in this field. His ethnographically-attuned observations of Iran integrated ancient texts with observable then-contemporary Zoroastrian ritual practice, forecasting much later work by J.K. Choksy. Other twentieth-century landmarks in Zoroastrian studies (e.g. Insler 1975) were followed by a broad-gauged volume (Malandra 1983). Iranists of North America today operate as specialists across issues of language and cultural history on Avestan and Zoroastrian studies – indebted to the learned breadth of R.N. Frye (e.g. Lincoln 2012; the prodigious oeuvre of P.O. Skjaervø).

Egyptian

In 1906, J.H. Breasted published English translations of a large corpus of Egyptian texts which did not, however, extend into the Persian Period. Lichtheim (1980) rectified this. Topical commentaries on Persian Period Egypt/Nubia include several text-based discussions (Burstein, Johnson, and Morkot, all in *Further Reading: Achaemenid History* 8 [1994]). Much important analytical work on Persian Period Egyptian texts has been situated in archeological/art historical studies relating to inscriptions on free-standing monuments (see below).

Classical Languages

The Loeb Classical Library (founded in 1911) championed side-by-side Greek and Latin texts with English translations. Fresh editions of discrete works have also abounded under other auspices. The field of classical literature in all genres has produced a great body of interpretive studies of Athenian perceptions of the Achaemenid Empire from the 1940s to the present (e.g. Bacon 1961). Twentieth-century luminaries who opened up thinking on Hellenism and the Persians include A.A. Momigliano while on the North American scene. The last quarter of that century into the present has yielded many explorations of Greek-Persian military encounters and political relations/institutions through Greek historical texts and also many explorations of eurocentrism in the classical literary tradition. North American scholarship has also explored specific Persian-Egyptian moments of imperial interaction through analyses of the classical texts.

Historical Overviews

Reviews of the US institutionalization of ancient Near Eastern historical scholarship frequently mythologize the role of W.F. Albright, who had an

intellectually inclusive view of the field (shared by many) – a view that did not see Cyrus’ conquest of Babylon in 539 BCE as The End. Adams noted with irony (1996) that the Albright centennial conference isolated Near Eastern history pre-Cyrus from anything later. Indeed, in the post-Albright era, North American surveys of ancient Mesopotamian history have vacillated on this point – sometimes stopping with intentional finality at 539 in a trend that runs curiously counter to the inclusive thrust of most cuneiformists’ positions otherwise. The turn to the twenty-first century has seen a renewed embrace of the Persian Period in some Mesopotamian historical narratives (e.g. Van de Mieroop 2004); inclusiveness is also championed in the *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern History* (inaugurated 2014).

Achaemenid- or Iran-focused histories emerged in the heady days of Chicago’s excavations of Persepolis. Cameron’s historical overview of pre-Achaemenid Iran (1936) emphasized that this was key to what came later. This insistence has been validated subsequently in archeological circles. Olmstead’s history (1948), completed posthumously by Cameron, began a trend to place the empire within a Near Eastern context that could now begin to be articulated through varied Achaemenid testimonia as well as through classical/biblical sources. New data and fresh approaches to this combined legacy have yielded a succinct overview (Waters 2014). Alexander’s vision of his domain in relation to the Achaemenid hegemony he supplanted in Asia is a matter of recurring debate (Finn 2012). Pockets of cultural resistance to the Macedonian conquest have been and continue to be probed from multiple vantage points (Eddy 1961; Jamzadeh 2012).

Studies in empire theory and in postcolonial theory flourished in the twentieth century, but did not explicitly consider the Achaemenid Empire. Cross-cultural comparative examinations of empires often continue to sideline it. But several noteworthy edited volumes have emerged in the early twenty-first century. Now see Khatchadourian (2016), which explores theories of empire and colonialism specifically sustained by Achaemenid archeological data. A significant element in North American discourses has been a direct confrontation by some prominent historians (e.g. K.A. Raaflaub) with the fact that Periklean Athens was an empire even as it was also a democracy – and that its technologies of hegemonic power owe much to Achaemenid models.

Archeology and the Material/Visual Record

Modern political-military history encouraging archeological missions by some western nations and marginalizing others in specific host environments determines the regional patterns of fieldwork by North American institutions.

Mesopotamia

Two Penn initiatives stand at the early end of our story. Following the 1893 discovery of the Murašû family estate-management business archive in Nippur, which was poorly documented archeologically (Bregstein 1993: pp. 20–32), Penn and the British Museum jointly excavated Ur in the 1920s. A collection of sealed bullae from a Persian Period coffin (apparently an artisan's accumulated models), a selection of which came to Penn, were first published along with seal artifacts from Ur and Nippur and the seal impressions on the Murašû tablets in summary catalogue fashion by curator L. Legrain. Bregstein's study of the Murašû seals established the significance of these data within a larger social-historical discourse. Both the Murašû and coffin corpora continue to be incorporated into new discussions on many topics. Seals on the Murašû tablets and other Persian Period Mesopotamian tablets inform issues of cultural continuity from the Neo-Babylonian period into Achaemenid times (e.g. Ehrenberg 1999).

As with so many archeological projects across the empire outside Iran itself, the exemplary excavations at Hacinebi (in modern Syria) targeted earlier eras but also yielded informative Persian Period grave assemblages (Stein in Further Reading: Kozuh, Henkelman, Jones, and Wood 2014). Similarly, many projects have elucidated continuities in seal use from the Persian Period into excavated Seleucid and Parthian contexts. Efforts have also elucidated cultural continuities from the Achaemenid imperial context through the Seleucid-Parthian eras as reflected in indigenous temple architecture and other material manifestations. North American scholarship has been critical, from M.I. Rostovstev's 1935 *Dura and the Problem of Parthian Art* onward, in urging that Seleucid-Parthian Mesopotamia was a socially complex arena with sustained indigenous legacies reformulated through the hegemonic force of the Achaemenid Empire and entangled with rather than smothered by Hellenism.

Pioneering mid-twentieth century surveys in Mesopotamia (Adams 1965) had a profound impact on strategies for understanding diachronic perspectives embracing the Persian Period, modeling later surveys across many regions of the empire. D. Stronach's excavations of the Assyrian capital of Nineveh in the 1990s uncovered vivid testimony of the city's destruction by Iranian-Babylonian forces, lending human immediacy to that historic moment which is also reflected in iconoclasm engendered during the sack and by the power of Nineveh and the legacy of Ashurbanipal's devastation of Elam (Root in Further Reading: Álvarez-Mon and Garrison 2011).

Anatolia

Dusinberre's analytical synthesis (2013) using wide-ranging archeological data and interpretive methodologies, caps more than a century of international

scholarship in which North American projects have loomed large. Excavations at Sardis began with H.C. Butler's Princeton campaigns (1910–1914), resumed later by both Harvard and Cornell. G.M.A. Hanfmann led Harvard's team from 1958 to 1976. His publications reveal his keen interest in Lydian and Achaemenid Sardis and in the integration of the site into a cross-temporal/cultural understanding of Anatolia. The Hanfmann-era publication (Pedley 1972) of all ancient texts referring to Sardis included citations from the Persepolis Fortification tablets. This was an enlightened act and one remarkably soon after their initial publication (Hallock 1969). Excavations continued first under C.J. Greenewalt Jr., who maintained an investment in the Achaemenid evidence and encouraged a comprehensive study of Persian Period Sardis (Dusinberre 2003), and now under Cahill (2008).

Excavations for Penn at Gordion began in 1950 by R.S. Young, Jr., followed by G.K. Sams and now by C.B. Rose. Many medium-specific publications illuminate Persian Period Gordion in the context of its *longue durée*. Dusinberre is now studying the rich Achaemenid cremation burials. Dendrochronology, established as a science by American astronomer A.E. Douglass and carried forward by P. Kuniholm, has aided research on Gordion and other Anatolian sites (Kuniholmet al. 2007; Roosevelt and Luke 2010).

M.J. Mellink discovered a remarkably complete though fragile Persian Period painted tomb (Karaburun II), during excavations of a Neolithic settlement in Lycia (Mellink 1972). The oft-cited imagery shows a regional elite dining scene negotiating local and imperial dining customs and drinking paraphernalia.

Studies of archeological assemblages/monuments not excavated by North American teams include important iconographical and architectural studies produced by Americans. Of outstanding significance is the analytical documentation of the sealed bullae from Daskyleion and other Anatolian sites (Kaptan 2002; Kaptan in Further Reading; Curtis, Simpson 2010).

Joint excavations at Troy (1988–2012) led by Rose revealed considerable Persian Period evidence. A salvage project undertaken after the looting of neighboring tumuli led to the Turkish-US Granicus River Survey Project. The built landscapes bristling with remnants and markers of elite identity in empire charted in this project (Luke and Roosevelt 2016) have implications for analyses of cultural memory and social imaginary upon formative phases of provincial Roman imperial expression in localized Anatolian contexts (Rubin 2008). Such important contemplations will ultimately relate back to the famous puzzle of the elaborate and ambiguous portrayal of Darius III and the Battle of the Issus (in Cilicia, Anatolia) on the “Alexander mosaic” in the Pompeian House of the Faun of the early Roman Empire. This monument became an exciting focus of late twentieth century North American research (Cohen 1997), informed by Nylander's readings of it (after his American days) from a Persian ideological perspective.

A major problem in Anatolian Persian Period glyptic has been the plethora of seals with no archeological context, which have nonetheless been treated as core evidence. The diffuse stylistic and iconographical variables on them have been used worldwide for over 100 years to structure concepts of “Graeco-Persian” production and taste. G.M.A. Richter (curator of classical collections at the Metropolitan Museum of Art) championed this approach in North America at mid-twentieth century. More recently, American scholars have urged that archeologically-grounded, contextualized data must be combined with theoretically-informed discourses in ethnicity studies in order to tackle the issues (Gates in Further Reading; Root 2002).

Newell (1938) identified and analyzed many of the Anatolian satrapal coin issues. Since then, Anatolian coinages have informed important cultural/political histories and explorations of the ideological implications of coin imagery and distribution.

Egypt

North American archeological interest in Persian Period Egypt has been weak compared to the strength of Egyptology focused on pre- and post-Persian times. A recent multidisciplinary analysis of empirical data that can be tied to the Persian Period now establishes a much richer corpus of visual/material evidence than heretofore considered, while also theoretically positioning Egypt within empire studies and elucidating the historiographical problems (Colburn 2014). Important issues involve the delineation of strategies for better appreciating how Egyptians under Persian rule (i) interacted with entrenched dynastic traditions in social practice and visual production and (ii) established new features we see more fully developed in Ptolemaic and Roman eras.

Two institutional projects have been important in the study of Achaemenid Egypt. The Brooklyn Museum houses notable Late Period collections cultivated by B. von Bothmer along with his research archive (the Corpus of Late Egyptian Sculpture). Documentation of the Temple of Hibis in the Khargeh Oasis sponsored by the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Davies 1953) has enabled fresh interpretive work (Cruz-Uribe 1988, on the text dossier; Ismail 2009, on features of the ritual imagery; Colburn 2014, on the temple imagery and also on features of the economy in this oasis region cultivated under Persian rule).

Numismatic analyses and reassessments of the seals and sealings from Persian Period Memphis (Colburn 2014) will soon be complemented by in-depth studies by M.B. Garrison and by D. Kaptan of the two seals applied to the bullae on the letters of Prince Aršama, mid-fifth century satrap of Egypt.

Israel/Palestine

Field activity in Mandatory Palestine began with Harvard's excavations at Samaria (1907–1912). It remains a major arena of North American archeology. Many Levantine sites have revealed only vestiges of the Achaemenid Empire through isolated or very small clusters of disparate finds –indicating the existence of important Persian imperial installations, but without much preserved contextualization. Nevertheless, extensive multi-media assemblages have also been excavated and published (e.g. Tell el-Hesi and Tel Michal). Seal studies have advanced through publication of the 62 seals impressed upon the disengaged bullae of the Wadi Daliyeh papyri (Leith 1997). Numismatic studies include a classic overview (Betlyon 1982) as well as social-political analyses relating to specific coinages (Jigoulov 2010).

A stimulating study (Carter 1999) approaches Persian Judah through the lens of E. Soja's Thirdspace theory, which sees lived spaces as registers of imaginal as well as physical/historical realms. Such work is in concert with J.W. Flanagan's initiative in founding the Social World of Biblical Antiquity Series.

Arabia/Nabataea

North American fieldwork in south Arabia began in 1950 with an expedition by the American Foundation for the Study of Man, leading to excavations (e.g. at Timna and Marib) and then to surveys; later decades brought studies of intra-regional trade – helping to create a picture of Arabia during the empire (Magee et al. 2005; Magee 2014). To the north in Nabataea, excavations at Petra now reveal evidence of a cosmopolitan Persian Period and early Hellenistic society underlying the Roman Period city (Graf 2013). These findings reinforce considerations of Roman Petra as a cultural memory landscape reflecting elite local ties to a prestigious past of Achaemenid association (Anderson in Further Reading: Root 2002, Curtis and Simpson 2010, and Dusinberre and Garrison in press).

Northern and Eastern Imperial Frontiers

North American fieldwork along these frontiers is limited. But research on Thracian nomadic arts was energized early (Rostovsteff 1922). G. Azarpay, A. Farkas, J. Davis-Kimball, J. Lerner, K. Rubinson, among others, have secured the field here through a variety of research initiatives including major exhibitions. The American Eurasian Research Institute, founded by Davis-Kimball, has sponsored Russian scholarship in translation. The new *Journal of Inner Asian Art and Archaeology* edited by Lerner focuses on Silk Road cultures from pre-Islamic through early Islamic times.

Graf's current investigation of travel networks along eastern reaches of the Silk Road seeks to elucidate their role specifically during the Achaemenid era and its immediate aftermath. Comparative work by M. Nylan on elite women in the Achaemenid Empire and in later Han China reveals potentials for probing mechanisms of the infiltration of Achaemenid courtly practice far to the east. Studies in glyptic imagery attest the impact of central Asian encounters on the Achaemenid imperial imagination (Wu in *Further Reading*: Curtis and Simpson 2010). Ebbinghaus (1999) has probed the role of luxury arts from Thrace as evidence of cultural negotiations with Persia rather than as an index of unidirectional influence.

Armenia

North American archeology on pre-Persian Urartu is distinguished, recently enhanced by contemplations of the imprint of this past upon the Iranian landscape. Ongoing American-Armenian excavations at Tsaghkahovit now bring the Transcaucasus into clarified view as a distinctive host for the Achaemenid imperial project, with analysis informed by approaches to agencies of social and imaginal space/place (Khatchadourian 2016).

Iran

Because of the volume of North American effort, a brief sketch of relevant institutional initiatives and a chronological sequence of fieldwork will precede a discussion of selected highlights of research.

Immediately before entering the American sphere, Herzfeld played a pivotal role in antiquities legislation which in 1930 broke the French monopoly on excavation in Iran. His career is revealed through extensive US archives (Metropolitan Museum of Art; Freer/Sackler Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution; Oriental Institute; US Department of State) (Abdi 2001; *Further Reading*: Gunter and Hauser 2005).

From 1931 to 1979, American excavations, ethnographic field work, and art historical site/museum studies flourished, ranging from prehistory onward. A.U. Pope incorporated the American Institute for Persian Art and Archeology in 1930 (later renamed the Asia Institute). Under its auspices the *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* (BAI) was launched, a high-profile international exposition was mounted, and Pope's 1938–1939 *Survey of Persian Art* was produced (Gluck and Silver 1996). An astute critique of the *Survey* by an eminent émigré historian of western art demonstrates the disciplinary significance accorded the arts of Iran at the time (Schapiro 1941). E. Yarshater's ambitious ongoing *Encyclopaedia Iranica* is a modern successor to the *Survey* in temporal scope.

In 1966, shortly before his death, Pope moved the Asia Institute to Shiraz. The American Institute of Iranian Studies filled the void and operated a center

in Tehran until 1979. In 1998 its scholarly mission was revived, but without a physical presence in-country. The *BAI*, revived in 1987, is a thriving eastward-looking journal with strong Achaemenid Studies content.

The Oriental Institute excavations in Persepolis ran from 1931 to 1934 under E. Herzfeld (1934, 1941) and from 1934 to 1939 under E. Schmidt (1953, 1957, 1970; Balcer in Further Reading: *Achaemenid History* 7 [1991]). From the beginning, the project saw Persepolis as a large zone encompassing not only the great platform (Takht) with its splendid imperial monuments and the nearby rock-cut royal tomb precinct at Naqsh-e Rostam, but also the surrounding and connecting plain. In 1932, the Metropolitan Museum of Art excavations at Qasr-e Abu Nasr (Old Shiraz/Istakhr) began under C.K. Wilkinson. His hope of recovering an Achaemenid city from this much-overbuilt site was disappointed; but the Elamite Persepolis Fortification texts now validate Istakhr's Achaemenid identity (under the name Tirazziš) as indeed a busy place within this Greater Persepolis.

After the Second World War, field efforts by North Americans in Persepolis moved to survey (Sumner 1986) and to individual programs of onsite investigation reflected in work by, e.g. Lerner, Mousavi, Nagel, Nylander, and Root.

In southeastern Iran, 1960s–1970s excavations at the long-distance trade hub at Tepe Yahya included remains of a Persian Period settlement published in 2004. Excavations at Nishapur in northeastern Iran have revealed an apparently Persian-Period *qanat* irrigation system.

Post-Second World War initiatives with significant implications for Achaemenid Studies involved elucidation of Iranian cultures immediately before the empire. The meticulously recorded architectural remains from excavations at Hasanlu directed by R.H. Dyson, Jr., have enabled explicit consideration of pre-Achaemenid Iranian palatial balconied superstructures and their later reflection in Persepolis. The nature of pre-Cyrus Median power and reach along with the extent of its cultural legacy has been much debated from multiple disciplinary perspectives (e.g. Brown in Further Reading: *Achaemenid History* 3 [1988], and *Achaemenid History* 4 [1990]; Muscarella in Further Reading: *Achaemenid History* 8 [1994] and Schmandt-Besserat 1980; Root in Further Reading: Root 2002). Targeted archeology in Media by T.C. Young, Jr., and L.D. Levine yielded evidence of Median precursors to Achaemenid columned halls (Gopnik in Further Reading: Curtis and Simpson 2010). (Stronach's excavation of Median Nush-e Jan and its fire temple preceded his American career, although the architecture report, co-authored with M. Roaf (Great Britain/Europe), appeared in 2007).

Pre-empire Elam was also investigated extensively post-Second World War, with several surveys in Khuzestan, while surveys in Fars operated alongside American excavations at Tepe Malyan (Anšan). The Fars projects offered data for analyses of acculturations and continuities into the Achaemenid era of a

Perso-Elamite phenomenon in what would become the Achaemenid heartland (e.g. Sumner in Further Reading: *Achaemenid History* 8 [1994]). Ongoing multidisciplinary efforts by North American scholars (Further Reading: Álvarez-Mon and Garrison 2011) strengthen the importance of the Elamite legacy.

Of the three excavated imperial capitals in Iran yielding significant Persian-period remains so far, Pasargadae and Persepolis have strong American associations. Two years before beginning work for the Oriental Institute, Herzfeld published a report on his 1928 surface investigations of Pasargadae. Nylander's theoretically-attuned 1970 architectural study, *Ionians in Pasargadae*, appeared just as he entered the USA. Similarly, Stronach's magisterial 1978 report, *Pasargadae*, on his British excavations there appeared not long before he settled in the USA. Stronach has since published extensively on the Pasargadae "paradise" garden (Stronach 1989). Codella's study of Achaemenid imperial gatehouses (Codella 2007) cogently considers the social spaces mapped by the layout of structures in the Pasargadae plain. Interpretations of its architectural sculpture and other finds remain important agendas.

The multivalence of numerous iconographical insignia of the Persepolis Takht (operating simultaneously on cosmic, sacral, and also political levels) had been noted early (Herzfeld 1941). But the idea took hold that Persepolis was an exclusively ritual place – created as a secluded setting for the celebration of the Persian New Year, Nowruz. Pope (1957) is the classic North American expression of this concept, which was simultaneously championed abroad. Studies in myth and ritual in Mesopotamian and Indo-Iranian traditions were then current in North American academe via T. Gaster and M. Eliade. They unwittingly enhanced the appeal of Pope's case. This binary notion of Persepolis as a ritual rather than a "real" city was reified in L. Mumford's popular 1962 *The City in History*. Later, the exclusively Nowruz reading was critiqued in methodological terms (Nylander 1974); and the Fortification tablets proved that Persepolis was a cosmopolitan environment situated along a vast network of communication (Colburn 2013), much-frequented for administrative and diplomatic as well as ceremonial purposes. American scholarship focusing on the architectural interpretation in the wake of Schmidt's site publications has been relatively limited, though some interesting glosses on the Takht monuments appear in Wilber (1969). Along with Codella's gatehouse study, some interpretive work has now been done on Persepolis architecture as a performative agent of social meaning (Root 2015). Empirical efforts include Mousavi's focused examinations of the Takht structure and its defensive system, which began before his move to the USA. He also provides a bridge for North American scholarship to the important archeological discoveries in Persepolis by Iranian excavators from the departure of the Chicago team in the 1930s to recent times (Mousavi in Further Reading: Root 2002; Mousavi 2012).

Based on several seasons onsite, A. Nagel comprehensively documented and interpreted the vestiges of polychromy in Persepolis architecture and sculpture (2013; forthcoming) – a project initially broached by Lerner in the 1970s.

Before the publication of Schmidt's *Persepolis I*, Frankfort published a short descriptive commentary on the relief sculpture of the site (1946) – reiterated posthumously in his influential handbook which included Achaemenid art as the last phase of Near Eastern tradition (Frankfort 1954, gestated in the USA). Simultaneously, Richter (1946) made a case for seeing Achaemenid sculpture as provincial Greek art – a view perpetuated in a likewise influential handbook (Richter 1949). The emphasis on the overriding debt of Achaemenid visual arts to Greece remained strong in US scholarship particularly through a 1974 monograph by A. Farkas. A comprehensive alternative approach urged that we see the courtly arts of the empire as a deliberative, ideologically-driven, program recasting traditions of the conquered lands to create an Achaemenid message (Root 1979). North American scholarship on Persepolis and other manifestations of official Iranian court sculpture has probed issues of technical production and systems of proportion and a great range of stylistic and iconographical/iconological studies. The backdrop for much of this involves a North American environment with rich traditions in iconographic and semi-otic theory reaching back to C.S. Peirce (1839–1914) and E. Panofsky in the 1930s. Other efforts experiment interpretively to understand the political and material relationships between representation and imperial court practices (e.g. Cahill 1985; Khatchadourian 2016).

Achaemenid seal studies based on evidence from Iranian contexts are dominated in North America by Herzfeld's 1933–1934 discovery of the 20000-plus sealed tablets of the Persepolis Fortification Archive (e.g. Garrison and Root 2001; Dusinger, Garrison, and Root all in Further Reading; Briant, Henkelman, and Stolper 2008) and by Schmidt's subsequent recovery of the 750-plus sealed tablets and bullae from the Treasury (Schmidt 1957). Achaemenid glyptic research seen through the Persepolis archives flourishes today against a North American tradition established by Frankfort and then rigorously intensified by E. Porada (Pittman 1995) and many others from the 1930s onward. The importance of analytical frameworks based on excavated glyptic evidence has been paramount. North American studies of the Persepolis seal impressions encourage new perspectives on style and iconography as features of production-patron mandates, regional hybridities, social networking in empire, and religious ritual (e.g. Garrison 2017, on ritual imagery).

Early numismatic research relating to the imperial issues included the definition of the basic sequence of sigloi (Noe 1956) and characterizations of early typological development (Robinson 1958). More recently, the Fortification seal corpus in combination with the texts has informed

understanding of the chronology of Achaemenid imperial archer coin types and archaic Athenian owl coins. Iconographical considerations of the meaning of the archer image on royal types operate in tandem now with evidence on archer imagery from the Persepolis archives.

Other genres of portable Achaemenid artifacts from Iranian sites have received attention (e.g. Abdi in Further Reading: Root 2002; Goldstein in Further Reading: Schmandt-Besserat 1980; Miller 1997). Serious concerns about forgeries and the art market cast shadows on a great deal of the unexcavated metalware (Gunter and Root 1998; Muscarella in Further Reading: Schmandt-Besserat 1980).

Studies of Mesopotamian kingship spearheaded by Frankfort in the 1940s alluded to the Achaemenids only in passing despite their gestation in Chicago following the Persepolis excavations. Achaemenid issues are now more likely to be incorporated into multicultural discourses on kingship (e.g. Brisch 2008). E.E. Kantorowicz's ground-breaking 1957 work, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology*, inspired new ways of considering the ambiguities of kingship and the divine that spilled over into Achaemenid scholarship (viz., Root 2013). There is, however, no consensus on the question of the divine status of the Achaemenid king (compare Garrison 2011; Root 2013).

Discussions of rituals and social practices of royal gifting operate (explicitly or implicitly) against a backdrop of North American anthropological studies by, e.g. Turner, Bell, Rappaport, Geertz, and Weiner (see, e.g. Root 1979: 227–284; Gunter and Root 1998; Nimchuk in Further Reading: Root 2002; Garrison in Further Reading: Kozuh, Henkelman, Jones, and Wood 2014).

Cultural relationships between Periklean Athens and Achaemenid Persia viewed through the visual/material record are a major feature of North American scholarship (e.g. both Laurence and Rubin in Further Reading: Dusinberre and Garrison in press; Miller 1997; Root 1985).

Discursive studies of Achaemenid art and archeology embedded in a larger temporal historical framing of pre- and post-Achaemenid Iranian studies begin with Herzfeld's ambitious but idiosyncratic survey from late prehistory through the Sasanian era (Herzfeld 1941). Porada (1965), covering the same chronological span, superseded it. Although now very dated, it was an important Anglophone teaching resource for decades. The significance of Achaemenid art and architecture specifically to the traditions of Parthian through Sasanian Iran is reflected vibrantly in learned work by a wide range of scholars, among whom M.P. Canepa is particularly notable and prolific today.

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- Álvarez-Mon, J., Garrison, M.B. (eds.) (2011). *Elam and Persia*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns. Chapters by Garrison, Root, and Waters demonstrate the varied research questions engaged in by North American scholars with regard to the complex associations between Elam and the Achaemenid Empire.
- Briant, P., Henkelman, W.F.M., Stolper, M.W. (eds.) (2008). *L'archive des fortifications de Persépolis. État des questions et perspectives de recherches* (Persika 12). Paris: de Boccard. A recent overview of current projects on the Persepolis Fortification Tablet texts and seals. Includes work by North American scholars Azzoni, Dusinberre, Garrison, Jones, Root, and Stolper.
- Crawford, W.R. (ed.) (1953). *The Cultural Migration: The European Scholar in America*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania. Article by art historian E. Panofsky is particularly relevant to the Achaemenid Studies context.
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- scholars in this rich global compendium make up one-third of the whole (Anderson, Dusinberre, Ebbinghaus, Fried, Frye, Garrison, Gopnik, Holtz, Kaptan, Lerner, Magee, Maras, Nimchuk, Shahbazi, Soudavar, Waters, and Wu).
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CHAPTER 108

Eastern Europe

Muhammad Dandamayev[†]

The historical interest in Iran's past has been great in Eastern Europe. For Russia this is due to the fact that the history of Iran has been inseparably linked to the history and cultures of Central Asia and Transcaucasia, which for a long period were parts of the Russian empire. During the past decades many works devoted to the history and cultures of the Achaemenid Empire have been published. Such works have been based on archeological remains, classical sources, and the cuneiform documents. They elucidated basic problems of the culture, social structures, religions, state administration, palace and temple economies, legal systems, ethnic and cultural contacts, monetary systems, etc. Scholars of the former Soviet Union and modern Russia devoted great efforts to archaeological excavations as well as to the study of written sources and secondary literature related to Achaemenid times.

It is appropriate to start this chapter with contributions dealing with the early history of the Iranian tribes in western Asia. E. Grantovskii remains the basic work in the field of early history of ancient Iranian tribes and their civilizations. His work contains research on Iranian tribes in western Asia beginning from their first appearance there in the ninth century BCE until the second half of the eighth century BCE when they already constituted the majority of the population in many regions of western Iran, although until the seventh century BCE they were politically dependent on Assyria, Elam, Urartu, and Mannaea. In the second quarter of the seventh century a Median kingdom was founded. Grantovskii examined in detail Iranian personal names and

toponyms as well as onomastic data in Assyrian inscriptions. As seen from these sources, the cult of the god Mazda and some other main religious beliefs of the west Iranian tribes existed already in the early first millennium BCE.

The first eastern European scholar in the field of Median history was Czecho-Slovak historian J. Prášek, whose book on the subject was published in 1906. He also was one of the scholars who first started to use cuneiform data for the study of ancient Iranian history. However, by now his works are completely outdated. *History of Media* by I.M. Diakonoff published in 1956 and republished in 2008 is partly devoted to the same subject and contains detailed essays on ideology and culture of the Median tribes of the first Iranian state, which was founded in the first half of the seventh century BCE and in 550 BCE became a part of the Achaemenid Empire. Its abridged version in English was included in *The Cambridge History of Iran* (Vol. 2, 1985). The same subject is investigated also in *History of Media* by I.G. Aliev, published in 1960, which contains a detailed study of the relations between ancient populations of the Iranian plateau. Finally, the history of Media is studied by I.N. Medvedskaya in a volume published in 2010. In her opinion, the capture of Media by Cyrus II was a continuation and at the same time a new stage in the history of the Iranian state. As she shows, Iranian religion, art, and culture took their roots from the heritage of the Median period. Besides, Media was a cultural mediator between the countries of the ancient Near East and Iranian tribes.

Among the major contributions of eastern European scholars, the works of J. Harmatta have to be mentioned. He in particular came to the conclusion that the Babylonian inscriptions of the Assyrian king Assurbanipal were used as a literary pattern by the Babylonian edict of Cyrus the Great (Harmatta 1971b). He also made an attempt to reconstruct the Median administrative apparatus based on Median words in Old Persian texts (Harmatta 1971a). S. Zawadzki studied relations between Media and Babylonia during the period of the fall of Assyria.

Within a few decades, between 550 and 512 BCE, the Persian state, originally based on tribal organization, developed into a world empire, comprising dozens of countries of the Iranian Plateau and central Asia as well as Mesopotamia, Egypt, and many other countries. This empire created a developed system of administration and socioeconomic institutions and started to govern more than 80 ethnic groups. For this the Persian authorities had to create a stable administration and establish an effective system for collecting royal taxes.

Several eminent Russian publications have been devoted to the history of the Achaemenid Empire during the second half of the twentieth century: M.M. Diakonov, *An Essay on the History of Ancient Iran* (1961; including also Hellenistic, Parthian, and Sasanian periods); M.A. Dandamayev, *Iran under*

the First Achaemenids, translated also into German (1976); *A Political History of the Achaemenid Empire* (1985; see also the English edition published in 1989 in Leiden); *The Culture and Economy of Ancient Iran*, in co-authorship with V. Lukonin (a revised English edition: 1989). All these works focussed on the Achaemenid government's capacity to establish and maintain relative peace during a considerable period of time over the vast territory from Egypt to Afghanistan. This government also created favorable conditions for the development of international trade and cultural contacts between various countries. The economic, social, and political institutions and cultural traditions founded during the Achaemenid period played an important role in history and were preserved in the course of many generations in the empire of Alexander the Great as well as in the Parthian and Sasanian states. Socioeconomic relations in the Achaemenid Empire were investigated in several publications by V.V. Struve. E.V. Rung focussed on diplomatic relations between Greek states and the Achaemenid Empire from the sixth to the fourth centuries BCE (Rung 2008).

Central Asia was an important historical region of the Achaemenid Empire. Archeological excavations in Tadzhikistan under the direction of B.F. Litvinsky continued during many decades and were of great importance. Together with I.P. Pichikjan he studied architecture, art, and written sources in Bactria from the sixth to second centuries BCE as well as the famous Amu Dayra (Oxus) treasure of the Vakhsh in southern Tadzhikistan, which originally belonged to a temple (Pichikjan 1991). Both also studied artistic objects which were unearthed during the excavations of the Bactrian temple of the Oxus, containing a great number of gold and silver items. Thanks to the Greeks deported by the Persian administration from Ionia to Bactria, Hellenistic culture rapidly spread in Central Asia already during Achaemenid times. Classical geographic tradition has saved valuable information on Bactria and neighboring countries which originates mainly from works of Scylax, Herodotus, Ctesias, and other Greek authors. This information was analyzed, in particular, by I.V. Piankov (1997). He also reviewed information about Central Asia in Ctesias' fragments (1975). Finally, information of written sources on Central Asian and Transcaucasian satrapies was studied by V.V. Struve (1968).

The development of Iranian art of the Median, Achaemenid, Parthian, and Sasanian periods was studied by V.G. Lukonin in his book *History of Ancient Iran* (in Russian, 1977) and in a number of other important works. In particular, Lukonin indicated that although almost all elements and images of Iranian art of the Achaemenid period can be traced back to earlier periods, nevertheless this art has a specific Iranian nature. Achaemenid art adopted achievements of earlier periods and at the same time marked a new and more advanced phase. Another book by Lukonin on ancient Iranian art was published in the

Archaeologia Mundi series entitled “Persia II” (1967). Lukonin’s outstanding contribution to the study of Iranian art and history is highlighted in annual lectures and seminars at the British Museum dedicated to his memory.

Moreover, Achaemenid art was scrutinized also by I.N. Medvedskaya. According to her it presented a culmination of the art of the preceding periods and at the same time represented the main source for the next development of the Near Eastern art before the Hellenistic period (Medvedskaya 2004). Finally, an important contribution to Achaemenid art was the volume *Persepolis* by Ion Miclea in Romanian language (Miclea 1971).

Already in Aristotle’s times European scholars started to take an interest in Zoroastrianism, which was the most important theological system created among ancient Iranian tribes. There have been various hypotheses about the specific region where Zoroastrianism is supposed to have originated. In the initial period of its emergence it was thought to be the religion of herds-men. Zoroaster appealed to his listeners with a call to protect livestock from the plundering raids of the nomadic tribes, whom he declared to be worshippers of the *daevas*.

In Achaemenid Persia various religious concepts existed and competed with each other, although the differences between them were gradually being wiped out. At the end of the sixth and beginning of the fifth centuries BCE Zoroastrianism was just beginning to gain a foothold in western Iran. The Achaemenid kings, having positively assessed the advantages of the teachings of Zoroaster for their new official religion, nevertheless did not repudiate the cults of the ancient tribal gods which were considered as the deities of nature. In Achaemenid times Zoroastrianism had still not yet become a dogmatic religion with firmly established norms. Beginning with Darius I we may speak about an early form of Zoroastrianism. Russian scholars expressed contradicting opinions about how to evaluate the “religion” of the Achaemenid kings. V.I. Abayev and I.M. Diakonoff considered them to be Zoroastrians, while according to V.V. Struve, the religion of the Persian kings was different from the doctrine of the Avesta since the Achaemenid king (not Zoroaster) was considered to be mediator between Ahuramazda and humans.

According to Abayev, the religious reform of Zoroaster was the result of a struggle between settled cattle-breeders and nomads. The latter are called *tūra* in the Avesta which, as Abayev assumes, was an equivalent of the ethnic term Sakai. The struggle was between the settled Chorasmians, Sogdians, Bactrians, and Iranians on one side, and Scythian nomads (Sakai and Massagetai) on the other side. The main enemies of the Zoroastrian tribes were characterized as *danana*. According to Abayev, this name designated Sakai from the region of the Syr-Darya. He identified them with the “Sakai who are beyond Sogdiana” mentioned in one of the inscriptions of Darius I (DPh).

V.V. Struve and I.M. Diakonoff assumed that the so-called Old Persian cuneiform writing was in fact Median writing, which had emerged under the influence of Urartian script. According to them the Persians had simply borrowed it in a ready-made form (Struve 1968: pp. 49–50; Diakonoff 1970: p. 120). It is the opinion of these scholars that Urartian annalistic traditions, through lost intermediate missing links, were used in Median inscriptions. For instance, in both the Urartian and Achaemenid inscriptions every paragraph begins with the words “(Thus) says the king.” Nevertheless, this hypothesis cannot be proven until Median inscriptions composed with “Old Persian” cuneiform are found. Although Russian scholars did not doubt the existence of written language in the Median state, one cannot deny the possible existence of writing in a foreign language. According to J. Harmatta, Darius I and his chancellery pretended that the Bisitun inscription was the first application of the Old Persian cuneiform script (Harmatta 1966).

A.A. Freiman was the author of a number of publications in the field of comparative historical grammar and dialectology of ancient Iranian languages. In his works on the etymology of the names Kuruš, Kambujiya, Čišpiš, which usually were considered to be of foreign origin, Abayev tried to demonstrate that they should be explained as Iranian. According to him all names of the Achaemenid kings without exception were of Persian origin (Abayev 1971). However, Harmatta disagreed with him regarding the interpretation of the names of Kambujiya and Čišpiš, which he considered as eastern Iranian (Harmatta 1971a: pp. 6–8). A number of articles on ancient Iranian borrowings in Aramaic were written by M.N. Bogolyobov. Dandamayev presented a comprehensive treatment of about 400 Iranian personal names attested in Babylonian documents of the Achaemenid period. In the same volume he presented an analysis on the inhabitants of the Iranian Plateau and Central Asia attested in Babylonian sources (1992). An up-to-date edition of the same volume was published in Russian in 2010.

Addendum by R. R.: The recent emergence of a new Old Persian inscription from Phanagoria on the Taman Peninsula has triggered several important studies where Russian scholars played a major role: Kuznetsov 2019; Kuznetsov/Nikitin 2019; Rung/Gabelkov 2019.

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CHAPTER 109

Iran

Ali Mousavi

The Early Iranian Concept of the Achaemenid Empire

The Iranian interest in Achaemenid Persia has a very long history. As early as the third century CE, the ruins attracted the Sasanians themselves native of Fars, whose major city was Istakhr located 6 km to the north. In the Sasanian period Persepolis or the City of Persians took the popular name of Sad-Sotun (hundred columns). This was the beginning of the mythological traditions that sought to explain the existence of the ruins. The palatial complexes on the Terrace of Persepolis were probably visited and used occasionally by Sasanian nobles and kings. In his *History of the Prophets and Kings*, Tabari gives the earliest evidence on the presence of the Sasanians at Persepolis in the context of the conflict between Ardashir and his elder brother, Shapur (Tabari's account is given in Nöldeke 1879: p. 8; see also Mousavi 2012: p. 79, for further discussion). According to the archeological evidence, some of the structures in the southwest sector of the Terrace were altered and used in the Sasanian period (Mousavi 2012: pp. 22, 196). Later, in the fourth century CE, Shapur II (r. 309–379) is proudly advertised through two inscriptions in Middle Persian engraved on the southern face of the east jamb of the doorway of the Palace of Darius (Frye 1966; Mostafavi 1978: pp. 216–217). There are also a number of incised sketches or graffiti of Sasanian princes carved on the stone structures of the ruins (Mousavi 2012: pp. 80–81). Outside Persepolis,

the royal necropolis at Naqsh-e Rostam became the royal “museum” for the Sasanians who immortalized their victories and exploits by having them carved on the sacred cliff below the tombs of their illustrious predecessors (for a full description and illustrations, see Schmidt 1953: pp. 127–132, pls. 80–95). The connection with these glorious Achaemenid monuments in Fars continued after the Muslim conquest of Iran. Inscriptions of medieval Iranian rulers carved on stone structures in the Palace of Darius bear witness to their admiration of the ruins (Mostafavi 1978: pp. 219–227; Mousavi 2012: pp. 81–94). At Pasargadae, the atabegs of Fars transformed the Tomb of Cyrus (known also under the name of the Tomb of the Mother of Solomon) into a mosque in the fourteenth century CE (Sami 1956: pp. 296–299; Stronach 1978: p. 37; 2011: pp. 80–81; Kleiss 1979: p. 281).

The Modern Era, the Nineteenth Century, and the Early Iranian Excavations

Recorded explorations and excavations in Iran carried out in general by European travelers and diplomats in Iran go back to the first decade of the nineteenth century. In spite of the fact that little is known of the interest of the Zands and early Qajar kings in the Achaemenid ruins of Fars, Fath-Ali Shah (1769–1834) and his sons were conscious about Iran’s glorious past. It should be mentioned that Fath-Ali Shah growing up in Shiraz under the Zands was impressed with the Iranian pre-Islamic past, a fact that is reflected in his bas reliefs often placed in the proximity of Sasanian reliefs in Rey and Kermanshah (Amanat 2012; Luft 2001). From the middle of the nineteenth century onward, archeological activities were intensified, and Naser al-Din Shah (r. 1848–1896) was, in fact, a patron of exploration and the recording of ancient monuments. Early in his reign, Naser al-Din, a passionate amateur photographer, was interested in acquiring photographs of the Achaemenid ruins in Fars. In the summer of 1850, Jules Richard, a Frenchman residing in Iran, was sent to take photographs of the ruins at Persepolis. Richard failed to receive the necessary funds to cover his travel expenses due to the government’s financial problems and he returned to Tehran without having fulfilled his task. Eight years later, the honor of documenting the ruins by means of the most fascinating technical invention of the century went to Colonel Luigi Pesce, an Italian infantry officer in the service of the Qajars, who took the first photographs of the ruins at Persepolis and Pasargadae (Adle and Zoka 1983: pp. 255–256; Mousavi 2012: pp. 138–139, fig. 7.5). Naser al-Din Shah had already expressed his interest in photography in the service of archeology by supporting the first Iranian excavation at Khorheh, the ruins of a Parthian site, in central Iran, where the work in progress was documented with photographs (Adle 2000).

The Qajar era also witnessed the first large-scale excavation of the ruins at Persepolis in 1877 by Prince Farhad Mirza Mo'tamed al-Dowleh (1817–1887), the governor of Fars. In January 1877, Prince Farhad Mirza, who had subdued a local rebellion in Fars, visited the ruins. The excavation lasted for a month according to his two inscriptions engraved on the stone doors of the Palace of Darius (Mostafavi 1978: pp. 228–229; Mousavi 2012: pp. 141–142, figs. 7.7 and 7.8). The work yielded “sculptures in stone, the location of a lofty edifice, a bridle and an iron plate that bore no figure on it.” The “lofty edifice” here is the building known today as the Hall of a Hundred Columns (Mousavi 2012: p. 142). Prince Farhad Mirza also supported the studies of Mirza Hasan Fasai (1821–1898), a great erudite of his time, and obtained authorization from Naser al-Din Shah for Fasai to compose a book on the geography and history of Fars, better known under the name of *Fārs-namey-e Nāseri*, in which the author describes the historical monuments of Fars, including the ruins at Persepolis, Naqsh-e Rostam, and Pasargadae.

Mohammad-Hasan Khan E'temad-al-Saltana (1843–1896), the celebrated statesman and erudite, who was Minister of Publication and Press in the reign of Naser al-Din Shah, had a number of books written in European languages translated into Persian, including The Fifth Monarchy of George Rawlinson's *The Five Great Monarchies of the Ancient Eastern World*. In his own *Mer'āt al-boldān-e nāsēr*, which is a description of Iranian provinces, sites, and monuments, he gives a full translation of Darius' inscription at Bisutun, taken from Rawlinson's book (Afshar 2009: p. 300).

In the same period, a number of nationalist thinkers and political activists postulated ideas of supremacy and glories of ancient Iran, among them the works of Akhundzadeh and Mirza Agha Khan Kermani being the most influential. In his *Ayiney-e Sekandari* (*The Alexandrian Mirror*), subtitled “The History of Ancient Iran,” published in 1892, Kermani traces the history of ancient Iran from the Achaemenians to the fall of the Sasanians. The book has been recognized as the first modern history of Iran written by an Iranian (Parsinejad 2003: p. 77; Afshar 2009: p. 302).

1900–1939

In the first decade of the twentieth century Forsat-al Dowleh, known as Forsat Shirazi (1854–1920), traveled extensively in Fars and documented various monuments. Forsat studied topography and painting. He learned the basics of cuneiform script and wrote a treatise on it (*Nahw o sarf-e khatt-e Āryā*). His best-known work, *Āsār-e Ajam*, is a collection of 50 of his drawings of the monuments, which was first published in Bombay in 1935 (Kashef 2001). This book stands as the first methodically illustrated description of the ruins

of Persepolis (Mousavi 2012: p. 145). The first publication of Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*, translated from French by Zia al-Din Gharib in 1914, and the compilation of history textbooks by Muhammad-Ali Foroughi witness an unprecedented effort in using classical sources pertinent to the history of ancient Iran (Afshar 2009: p. 303).

In the early twentieth century the distressed condition of the ruins at Persepolis had already become a significant concern among the Iranian intelligentsia. The abolition of the French Monopoly on Archaeological Excavations in 1927 following the advent of the Pahlavis led to the promulgation of the Antiquities Law in 1930 which paved the way for international teams to carry out archeological research in Iran (Bagherzadeh 1990: p. xvi; Mousavi 2005: p. 457). The Iranian government entrusted the direction of the newly created Antiquities Department to the French architect and art historian André Godard, who built an archeological museum (the Iran Bāstan Museum), which opened in 1937.

Parallel to the commencement of large-scale excavations of Achaemenid sites in Fars in the early 1930s, particular mention should be made to the publication of the first detailed history of ancient Iran in Persian by Hasan Pirnia, known as Moshir al-Dowleh (1871–1935). Educated in Russia and France, Pirnia was a prominent politician, serving four times as prime minister under the late Qajars. He played a crucial role in drafting the Persian Constitution of 1906. Thanks to his erudition and interest in the history of pre-Islamic Iran, he was commissioned by the Iranian Ministry of Culture to write a school textbook, *Iran-e Qadim*, on the history of Iran from the beginning to the fall of the Sasanians. Later, he took on the monumental task of writing a detailed history of ancient Iran, *Iran-e Bastan*, which he could not complete before his death. Three volumes appeared in his lifetime between 1931 and 1934, two of which deal with the history of Iran from the beginning to the end of the Achaemenids. Pirnia's eloquent style and acumen, and especially his objectivity in dealing with the rise and fall of the Achaemenid Empire, have made *Iran-e Bastan* a very popular book that has been since reprinted at least three times.

1945–1979

In 1941, Fereydoun Tavallali, the first graduate of archeology from the University of Tehran, carried out soundings in prehistoric sites in the Marvdasht plain, in Fars, including Tol-e Malyan. Other Iranian archeologists of the time had different training and backgrounds: Muhammad Taqi Mostafavi, who later became director of the General Department of Archeology, had a degree in law. Mostafavi participated in E. Herzfeld's

excavations at Persepolis from 1931 to 1934 and later published a thorough account of the early steps in the archeological exploration of the ruins (Mostafavi 1976). After the departure of the Oriental Institute team, the Iranian Department of Antiquities under Godard took charge of the excavation and restoration work at Persepolis and other Achaemenid sites in Fars. With the outbreak of the Second World War, and in the absence of any foreign archeological mission in Iran, the newly-hired members of the General Department of Archeology moved into higher ranks; among them Ali Sami was the most outstanding figure. Sami, who is said to be the first Iranian excavator of modern times, studied art and literature in Shiraz before beginning his excavations at Pasargadae and Persepolis. Sami's excavations there cover a long span of time from 1941 to 1961, but a detailed report has never been published. During his tenure at Persepolis (1941–1961) he excavated various parts of the site and explored other sites in the region, notably Pasargadae. After his retirement in 1962, Sami devoted himself to the teaching of ancient Iranian civilizations at the Pahlavi University of Shiraz until the late 1970s. His preliminary reports, published in two thick volumes of *Gozāreshhāy-e Bāstānshenāsi* (*Archaeological Reports of the Iranian Department of Archaeology*) in 1952 and 1960, are organized in chronological order, giving a summary of annual work at Persepolis (Sami 1952, 1960; a summary of his activities at Persepolis is given in Mousavi 2012: pp. 194–198). Sami also published a two-volume book on various aspects of the Achaemenid period (*The Achaemenid Civilisation*, 2 volumes, the Pahlavi University Press, Shiraz, 1962–1963), which was another attempt to compile a *histoire totale* of the Achaemenid Empire. Ali Hakemi, Sami's field assistant and architect, drew topographic maps and building plans. Hakemi's early study of the topography at Persepolis is a lesser-known but important contribution (Hakemi 1970).

Changes within the Iranian institutions were instrumental in the development of archeological research and legislation in Iran. The Department of Archeology was attached to the Ministry of Culture and Arts created in 1964, and in 1972 the foundation of the Iranian Centre for Archeological Research (ICAR) by Firouz Bagherzadeh brought all archeological fieldwork into a well-organized center. The celebration of the 2500th anniversary of Iranian monarchy in 1971, despite some negative political effects, gave a boost to the archeological operations and restoration projects concerning Achaemenid sites in Fars.

The National Organization for Conservation of Historical Monuments, established in 1956, maintained close relations with the IsMEO (later IsIAO: Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente, which was unfortunately closed down in 2012), and provided financial assistance and logistic support for various restoration projects in Iran. In 1964, a team of Italian restorers under Giuseppe Tilia in collaboration with the Iranian National Organization for Conservation

of Historical Monuments began an expansive program of restoration of major Achaemenid sites in Fars which lasted until 1979 (Mousavi 2012: pp. 202–224). The excavations at Persepolis had reached a standstill after Sami's retirement in 1962. With the arrival of the Italian team of restorers in 1964, there was the necessity of undertaking archeological excavations at the site. In the autumn of 1968, Ali-Akbar Tadjvidi presented a proposal for undertaking a new program of research at Persepolis and other sites of the Marvdasht to investigate the "origin of the Achaemenid civilization and its early manifestations in Fars," and to establish a regional stratigraphy that would clarify the chronology of the plain at the time of the Persian Empire. The project proposed to open soundings in the southern plain adjacent to the Terrace of Persepolis, at Istakhr, and at Pasargadae (Mousavi 2012: pp. 206–207).

Tadjvidi's excavations were concentrated on the eastern fortifications on the top of Kuh-e Rahmat and areas to the south of the Terrace. The excavations resulted in the uncovering of a number of palatial buildings in the southern plain. Tadjvidi excavated a portion of the upper fortifications, which comprised three towers and their adjacent structures (Tadjvidi 1976: pp. 187–213). Aside from the originality of architectural features and some 150 bronze arrowheads, probably the most interesting discovery here was a collection of sealed clay labels bearing impressions of a cylinder seal that matches up with one already known from the Persepolis Treasury archive depicting a combat (Tadjvidi 1976: pp. 201–217; Garrison and Root 2001: p. 34). An illustrated and substantial report on these excavations was fortunately published in Persian (*Dānestanihāy-e novin*, Tehran, 1976), providing the basis for the present analysis. Although two brief notes on important finds were also published in English, for more than three decades Tadjvidi's full publication has remained inaccessible to most scholars in the field (Tadjvidi 1969, 1970, 1973, 1975, 1976).

In 1973, Ali Shapur Shahbazi became director of Achaemenid sites in Fars, a position he held until 1979. Aside from a large array of interests and numerous scholarly publications on the history of ancient Iran, Shahbazi published the "authoritative guide" to the monuments at Persepolis (*Persepolis Illustrated*), translated into English, French, and German. Being deeply attached to the ruins, he extensively published on different aspects of Achaemenid studies until his death in 2006 (Mousavi 2012: pp. 212–213).

1979–2010

It is still premature to present an overall assessment of Achaemenid research and studies in Iran during the past 30 years. The results of a number of excavations, such as the excavation of Tepe Hegmataneh in Hamadan, have

not been fully published. The following history of research gleaned from various sources is far from complete.

The cooperation of international teams in Iran came to a standstill and the outbreak of the eight-year Iran–Iraq war in 1981 interrupted most of the archeological activities in the country for a while. Five years after the dissolution of the former Ministry of Arts and Culture, including the ICAR by the Revolutionary Council, the Iranian Cultural Heritage Organization (ICHO) was founded in 1985. A few Iranian teams took up the task of excavating and preserving archeological sites and monuments during the difficult years of war. In 1987, the ICAR was incorporated in the Research Department of the newly created Cultural Heritage Organization of Iran. The new organization took charge of archeological research and restoration of historic monuments, and public museums.

The restoration work at the Achaemenid sites of Fars continued while fresh excavations were conducted at Susa. In 1981, a team of archeologists under M. Kaboli began to excavate along the western side of the Apadana tell with the aim of finding the western entrance to the royal residence. Two seasons have been carried out so far without gaining the expected goal, the discovery of the “main entrance” to the palace (Kaboli 2000: pp. 250–252). Since its creation, the ICHO has been in charge of the archeological research, restoration, and protection of monuments and sites in a developing country. The ICHO upheld the minimum maintenance and protection of sites and sponsored a number of excavations. One should mention the fortuitous discovery of a Neo-Elamite burial at Arrajan in the plain of Behbahan on the border between Fars and Khuzistan (Towhidi and Khalilian 1982; Alizadeh 1985; Álvarez-Mon 2010: pp. 1–4). The excavations at Tepe Hegmataneh, which had been one of the former ICAR’s projects in the 1970s, were finally launched in 1983. Eleven seasons of work resulted in the uncovering of an extensive complex of buildings and parts of the massive city wall (Sarraf 2003). The excavations, however, failed to yield any significant vestiges of Median or Achaemenid date (M. Azarnoush, personal communication).

In the first years of the twenty-first century, independent projects were undertaken in southwestern Fars by a joint Australian–Iranian team from the University of Sidney and the former Iranian Center for Archeological Research. The team explored a number of sites in the region of Fahlian, including the Achaemenid pavilion at Tepe Sarvan (Potts et al. 2007). In the area of Persepolis, two recent archeological activities deserve mention here. A French team carried out a surface reconnaissance in the plain of Marvdasht between 2005 and 2008, with the aim of exploring the *aménagement du territoire* in the “settled zone” in the vicinity of Persepolis. The survey yielded some interesting results, such as the systematic exploitation of

resources and land use involving important infrastructural activities, for example hydraulic constructions and canals, the traces of which had been previously detected (Boucharlat et al. 2012). A joint Iranian–Italian team carried out two seasons of excavations in the vicinity of the Terrace of Persepolis, the locations of which were chosen according to the results obtained from the geomagnetic surveys. The excavations were sponsored by the former Iranian Center for Archeological Research, the Parsa-Pasargadae Research Foundation, and the University of Bologna. Thirteen trenches were opened during two seasons of work in 2008 and 2009 in the area of Persepolis, but in the absence of any substantial publication, one can hardly present an assessment of the results (Askari et al. 2012, 2013). Surface studies and geophysical surveys at Pasargadae in the early part of the twenty-first century help to understand better the layout of the Achaemenid site which is poorly known despite the important research carried out in the past (Boucharlat 2002; Boucharlat et al. 2012). The construction of the Sivand dam near Pasargadae brought up the opportunity to renew archeological activities at Pasargadae between 2005 and 2009. The ICAR decided to organize an international archeological salvage project because of the threat created by the dam. M.T. Atai, acting on behalf of the Parsa-Pasargadae Research Foundation, conducted a systematic survey of the area in the spring of 2004. Between 2006 and 2007, a Franco-Iranian team under R. Boucharlat and M.T. Atai carried out soundings and excavations on several detected sites, including a small pavilion with two columned porticoes located at the entrance of the gorge. It consists of a square building with two opposing porticoes. The whole building measures 24.60 m × 19 m. Given the shape and decoration of the columns, it seems that the building dates to the reign of Darius I (Atai and Boucharlat 2009: p. 21). Finally, following the fortuitous discovery of four decorated stones at Pasargadae in the spring of 2004, a limited excavation in the area behind Tall-e Takht in 2006 revealed further fragments of a stone door which may have belonged to the door of the Zendan monument (Mousavi and Atai 2013). Further studies in the region of Pasargadae revealed traces of an Achaemenid system of waterworks and canals (De Schacht et al. 2012).

Decentralization of archeological activities in Iran has generated a large number of excavations and surveys throughout the country; given the increasing number of those operations, one can hardly keep up with the pace of new publications. However, thanks to the editors of *Bastanpazhuhi*, a semi-annual journal of Iranian archeology, a whole series of reports on the archeological activities concerning Achaemenid sites in Iran appeared a few years ago (*Bastanpazhuhi*, vol. 17, Nos. 14–15, 2013). Further reports were presented at archeological conferences in Tehran in 2013 and 2014.

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CHAPTER 110

The Achaemenid Empire: Realm of Tyranny or Founder of Human Rights?

Josef Wiesehöfer

Introductory Remarks

“And for me, to take this object to Iran, to be allowed to take this object to Iran was to be allowed to be part of an extraordinary debate led at the highest levels about what Iran is, what different Irans there are and how the different histories of Iran might shape the world today. It’s a debate that’s still continuing, and it will continue to rumble, because this object is one of the great declarations of a human aspiration. It stands with the American constitution. It certainly says far more about real freedoms than the Magna Charta. It is a document that can mean so many things, for Iran and for the region.” (http://www.ted.com/talks/neil_macgregor_2600_years_of_history_in_one_object/transcript?language=en)

In a speech in Edinburgh in 2011, from which this quotation is taken, Neil MacGregor, at that time Director of the British Museum in London, assigned world-historical significance to the inscription on the so-called Cyrus Cylinder (Kuhrt 2007a,b; Finkel 2013; van der Spek 2014). At the same time, however, he hinted that this significance as well as the question of the identity (identities) of Iran were highly controversial topics among both scholars and the general public. Some – most Assyriologists, historians, and Iranianists – regard the inscription as (an only to a very limited degree exceptional) part of ancient Near Eastern legitimization strategies.

Others – especially the media and a wider public in Europe, the United States, and Iran – are convinced that the inscription, allegedly standing at the beginning of a story of human rights declarations, need not fear comparison with those of more recent times (see the quotation above). Even the author of the inscription is dissociated from the context of ancient Near Eastern kingship. Cyrus is described as an exemplary monarch who departed from the power and legitimation strategies of his predecessors and founded a kingdom in which for the first time (at least temporarily) human dignity was respected. It is not surprising that recent exhibitions of the Cyrus Cylinder in Tehran, the United States, and Mumbai have met with extraordinary interest from the media and the general public. (https://www.ted.com/talks/neil_macgregor_2600_years_of_history_in_one_object/transcript; https://www.britishmuseum.org/about_us/news_and_press/press_releases/2012/cyrus_cylinder_travels_to_us.aspx; accessed January 15, 2015). The supposedly exceptional character of the Cylinder and its author featured prominently in advertisements for the exhibitions (<http://cyruscylinder2013.com/about>; accessed January 15, 2015). It is strange, however, to observe the degree of passion (to say nothing of the bitterness and sometimes hostility) that characterizes these debates: while some talk of a false idealization of the ancient Persians, others see this same criticism as part of a long tradition of “Western” negative views of *the* “Orient” (cf. <http://iranian.com/posts/view/post/15105> [accessed January 15, 2015] and many other statements in social media and in books and articles).

The discussion about the significance and meaning of the inscription in Europe, the USA, and not least Iran and the Iranian “diaspora,” apart from the problem of the historical assessment of king and empire, is connected with further problems: What world-historical significance can be assigned to the “country” where the realm of the Teispids and Achaemenids had its core? Which traditions of the first millennium BCE are said to have led to our own time? How was and is the world outside Iran judged in today’s Iran? What part has the history of the Achaemenid Empire played in the process of Iran’s nation-building? The debates are extremely diverse, both in and outside Iran, not least because they are closely intertwined with the legacies of orientalism and post-colonialism. Moreover, they are also shaped by recent Iranian-European/American relations and internal Iranian political affairs.

The character of Achaemenid rule, which is at the focus of this debate, will now be analyzed by way of reference to two aspects of Achaemenid history: (i) the problem of ancient (and recent) views of Cyrus, and (ii) the question of the role of the Achaemenid Empire in the overall context of Ancient Near Eastern history.

Cyrus II, King of Persia: Founder of an Empire, “Wise Prince,” and “Immoderate Ruler”

In October 1971, the world's media report with fascination on a scene which occurs in a rather insignificant place in southwest Iran: standing in a royal pavilion, a ruler in court dress pays respect to an apparently dead person near his modest house-shaped tomb, promises in a firm voice to preserve his legacy, and ends with the words: “Cyrus, Great King, King of Kings, immortal son of history, rest in peace, since we are on guard and shall be so in the future.” Three days later, the same ruler makes his soldiers publicly parade in historical dress below the terrace walls of a gigantic ancient royal residence, thereby suspending time and space for the reason of his own legitimation.

As is well known, the organizer of this festival was the last shah of Iran. Some observers (like the author himself) perhaps watched on television the celebrations at Pasargadae, the burying place of Cyrus which had already been robbed in antiquity, and at Persepolis, the residence of Darius I and his successors. They might even have watched the official film version in which Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi Shahanshah Aryamehr, as he called himself, had Orson Welles herald his version of the historical events of the sixth century BCE. Months before the festivities, university students had staged strikes in protest. Indeed, the cost was so prodigious that the shah forbade his associates to disclose the actual figures.

It is not intended here to provide the reader with more details concerning the motives of this historicist spectacle. Such discussion can be found elsewhere (cf. Ansari 2012: pp. 166–179 for the state of research). Nor is it the task at hand to trace the motives of the shah and those who followed his invitation (for which see Wiesehöfer 1999). The shah's orientation toward Cyrus and his policy might have stemmed from purely political considerations or from both calculation and genuine admiration of the Persian king. It was successful – at least abroad – for a long time because Cyrus seemed to be an ideal model. It is now clear that not only is a comparison between a humanistic Cyrus and a philanthropic shah misleading, but the basic ideas of government attributed to the former ruler are totally unhistorical. In reality, those traditions that in antiquity had depicted Cyrus as an ideal ruler had not done so to show the king how he was but to show him how he wanted to be seen. However, not even these traditions attempted to turn Cyrus into a propagator of freedom of opinion and of human rights, into a king who did away with forced labor, supported a minimum wage, tried to abolish slavery, and defended the right to asylum. This was the work of the shah and his courtiers, whose ideas found their way into forged translations of Cyrus' proclamations. But what do we know of the historical Cyrus, and what are the reasons for his

positive reputation from which the late shah tried to profit (see Wiesehöfer 2001: pp. 42–55, 260–263; Kuhrt 2007a,b; van der Spek 2014 [with reference to the sources and the older literature])?

As early as the fifth century BCE, the Greek author Herodotus characterized the Persians under Cyrus' rule as modest, sober, and brave. He depicted their king, whom they are said to have called “father,” as militarily and politically apt, friendly, and generous, even toward enemies like the Median king Astyages and the Lydian ruler Croesus. Herodotus' famous story of Croesus' careful treatment has until now served as an exemplary description of a generous victor. However, the “historian” also attributes thoroughly negative aspects to Cyrus, and these even appear to predominate, although they have had less influence in forming the king's traditional image than his positive features have exerted. Cyrus can also be hard and intolerant, hot-tempered and irascible. His death is almost an illustration of Herodotus' idea of the expansionist ruler who does not realize when he is going too far. Yet it looks as though the author, despite his reservations regarding some of the oral traditions about Cyrus – for instance those of Iranian origin – could not resist being fascinated by the Persian king's personality. If we further bear in mind that many Persian subjects had approved of Cyrus, that in retrospect – Herodotus was writing about 100 years after Cyrus' death – certain things may have seemed “transfigured,” and that the Greek author was less concerned with the life and politics of Cyrus than with the wars between Persians and Greeks in the days of the Great Kings Darius and Xerxes, then the positive features of Cyrus may appear more intelligible.

Historically, even more influential than Herodotus' image of Cyrus was that of the Greek historian Xenophon, who wrote a kind of biography of the king (the *Cyropaedia*; for that work, see now Jacobs 2020). Until the eighteenth century CE, this work – as a kind of “Mirror of Princes” – was one of the most-read books in Europe, and there are many reflections of the Xenophonic king of Persia in European literature and art (for that, see Wiesehöfer 2017). Perhaps no other book did more than Xenophon's *Education of Cyrus* to define our view of the good, wise, and tolerant Cyrus. The contrast between the ideal early days of Persia and the “decadent” state of Persian affairs of Xenophon's own time in the eighth book of the *Cyropaedia* might have reinforced this impression. While the fictitious and imaginary nature of this work has long been acknowledged, to this day it has not been classified within any specific genre. Although it certainly reflects Xenophon's own observations of the Persian way of life as a writer, soldier, and eyewitness, and although it could also presuppose some knowledge about Persia among its readers, any assessment of the *Education of Cyrus* as a piece of historical writing must be ruled out. How the “Greek” and “Iranian” components of the work are to be evaluated is another question. In the past, its Greek character was rightly

emphasized, and it was compared with the “Mirrors of Princes” that had appeared as a result of the debates about the ideal state (and ideal statesman) that had become so popular in Hellas in the fourth century BCE. More recent scholars, however, have also stressed its connections with the Iranian epic tradition and Iranian folklore. As our knowledge stands at present, the question about the relative importance of these two elements cannot be answered. But what is clear is that Xenophon’s motives required an attractive picture of Cyrus.

Aside from the qualities of Xenophon’s Cyrus, no other factor has won people’s hearts like the king’s characterization as “God’s Anointed” in Deutero-Isaiah and the repatriation of the Judeans from Babylonian captivity and the call to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem, both mentioned in other books of the so-called Old Testament. However, it is not without good reason that in the Old Testament Cyrus was depicted with such positive qualities. Old Testament exegesis has shown that the texts of particular importance in this connection (the Second Book of Chronicles, the Book of Ezra and the Prophecies of Deutero-Isaiah) are not to be considered as strictly “historical” records but as writings promising or describing a “theological turning-point” for Israel. Cyrus appears as the “instrument of Yahweh’s historical action,” ending the period of exile and leading to a new beginning. Scholars even debate whether the order to build the temple, the restoration of the cult in Jerusalem, and the repatriation of the deported Jews can in fact be traced back to Cyrus, or whether we are rather to assume a (theological) “back-projection,” attributing deeds to this hoped-for savior that were only to be authorized or begun at a later period.

Other parts of the Cyrus tradition, especially the contemporary Mesopotamian historical tradition, like the Nabonidus Chronicle, the Cyrus Cylinder inscription, or the so-called Persian Verse Account – all commissioned by Cyrus or written under his supervision – also praise the new king, stress his close connection to Babylon’s city-god Marduk, and present the king as the positive counterpart to his military opponent Nabonidus, the last Neo-Babylonian king (for those texts and their being part of the Teispid historical tradition, cf. Rollinger 2014a). Out of these it is the Cyrus Cylinder that has made the biggest impression: according to the last shah, “for its advocacy of humane principles, justice and liberty, (it) must be considered one of the most remarkable documents in the history of mankind” (Pahlavi 1967: p. 9). The religious historian Ismael Quiles applied to it terms such as “respect for human dignity,” “freedom of conscience,” “desire for peace” or “humanism” (Quiles 1974). Many scholars have interpreted the last sentences of this building inscription as a confirmation of Cyrus’ repatriation policy or even of the repatriation of the Judeans. The Cyrus Cylinder inscription, for its part (like the other Babylonian testimonies referred to), is not to be considered as a document that has come down to us by chance but as a kind of *res gestae*

composed for the new ruler and presenting his qualities against a background of their ostensibly special appreciation by Babylon's city god, Marduk. It thus fits into the framework of the ideological conflict between the new and the old king, and says less about Cyrus' character than about his efforts at legitimation and his ability to use local traditions and models to serve his own purposes. This Babylon-centered document is certainly not to be understood as an empire-wide declaration.

We can take one further step toward a more nuanced evaluation of Cyrus' politics by calling on other – so far rather neglected – sources, and by reinterpreting already familiar material. There are indications that Cyrus did not always distinguish himself by treating his opponents leniently and kindly. The Nabonidus Chronicle, like the Cyrus Cylinder a piece of propaganda at Cyrus' service, reports that both the final conquest of Media and its "capital city" Ecbatana and the conquest of Babylonia were not achieved as smoothly and non-violently as the classical sources in particular would have us believe; instead, Cyrus took strict measures against his opponents and their loyal soldiers and subjects. Probably the best-known example of the Persian king's allegedly magnanimous treatment of his enemies, namely his leniency toward Croesus, is totally unhistorical. Not only are there ancient accounts reporting the death of Croesus during the sack of Sardis, but the pro-Cyrus versions have been proved to be later phases in the elaboration of the Croesus tradition (Burkert 1985). And in the course of the Persians' fight against the rebellious cities of Asia Minor, Cyrus' soldiers did not behave in a manner different from that of other rulers' armies: they not only plundered and burned down houses and sanctuaries but also deported the city elites. All this was surely done by order of the Persian king himself.

Cyrus' politics – for about his character, as we have seen, nothing reliable can be inferred from the sources – consisted of reflections, aims, and methods similar to those of his predecessors in the Ancient Near East or to those of his successor Xerxes, who is characterized much more negatively in Greek tradition (cf. Wiesehöfer 2006; Henkelman et al. 2011; Bridges 2015 who, however, is not really familiar with the continental European scholarly literature). Side by side with Cyrus' "tolerant" aspects, such as the restoration of places of worship, the repatriation of exiles, and the acceptance of religious diversity, he also committed "intolerant" acts such as the looting of temples and the deportation of populations. Cyrus' life and politics managed to acquire an exemplary character because certain political constellations were in his favor and certain factors that might have clouded his image were not operative – or at any rate not yet. Thus, while the Greco-Persian conflict still lay in the future, there were politically as well as "ideologically" influential groups or individuals who were interested in his success or wanted to set him up as an example. Cyrus was indeed able to pass the rule on to his son Cambyses, but after his death

the fragility of the empire he had established was revealed. Only the usurper Darius, successful against all odds, secured its existence and gave it stability for the first time as a kind of second empire builder. Looking at Darius as the “savior” of the kingdom, Xerxes I and Artaxerxes I may be characterized as monarchs who not only secured Persian rule for a long time but also ultimately created structures that survived until the end of the empire (Wiesehöfer 2007a; Rollinger 2014b).

Even if the traditional view of Cyrus, not least thanks to his own endeavors, is much too positive and hides the dark side of the conqueror’s policy, it is clear that the founder of the first world empire in history must have been a man with extraordinary abilities. It is no wonder that in Iran and other parts of the ancient Near East numerous stories, modeled after older traditions, bestowed praise on this exceptional ruler (cf. Hdt. 1.214), and that an extraordinarily talented author like Herodotus a few generations after Cyrus was able to create a chronological scheme of great influence in which the succession of three world empires played a major role, the last and most important of which was the Persian Empire of Cyrus (Wiesehöfer 2013a).

Cyrus as a champion of the human rights movement – remember the term “charter” in the shah’s programmatic texts – is as much a phantom as the enlightened and humane shah of Iran. The historical Cyrus’ pragmatic political principles had always been to his own advantage and for the upkeep of peace and order in his empire. He, who for that purpose had used both carrots and sticks, would have been a real predecessor of the last shah if the latter had not intended to bask in the unclouded brightness of the founder of the Persian Empire. He had trusted the idea that his view of Cyrus as an ideal ruler not only would be successful with a European-American public and with his supporters in the country but would connect itself there with the idea of an Iranian identity that had survived all disasters and was paired with cultural excellence (Matin-Angari 2012).

Cyrus the Great and his inscription were not able to save the last shah, but the Teispid and his alleged human rights declaration found their way into the hearts of many Iranians, regardless of their political, religious, or philosophical convictions. After all, it had been “difficult ... to criticise the King of Kings, Light of the Aryans, when the ‘West’ appeared to be endorsing his views” (Ansari 2012: p. 179). Even today, influential non-Iranians such as Neil MacGregor and others still support the idea of the uniqueness of the Cyrus Cylinder. As for the debate about the universal or culturally relative validity of human rights, although one of those “fundamental issues that will never find a definitive, all mutually satisfying solution” (Bielefeldt 2008: p. 98; for the discourse on democracy and human rights in Iran, see Sarkohi 2014), we should not forget that the “recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation

of freedom, justice and peace in the world” (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Preamble). It has rightly been stated that the political exploitation of that issue has always been part of the history of human rights. However, those faults and dangers must not prevent scholars from checking an unsound theorem such as the Cyran human rights proclamation and policy with the help of conscientious philological and historical source criticism. This criticism does not prove a connection between political measures of Cyrus and a human rights policy at all, but it does ascribe an exceptional strategic and politico-ideological talent to the Iranian ruler and its own historical “truth” to the persistent myth of the benefactor Cyrus.

A “Forgotten Empire” of a Special Quality? The Achaemenid Empire in an Ancient Near Eastern and Greek Perspective

Again and again and up to this day, both scholars and those outside of the academy have emphasized the special quality of the Achaemenid Empire, partly by way of reference to its ideal ruler Cyrus. In particular, they have associated this quality with an alleged redefinition of the relationship between the “King of Kings” and his subjects by the Achaemenid kings themselves, at least by rulers such as Cyrus and Darius I. They have connected it to a supposedly greater “tolerance” in political and religious affairs and to an intensified promotion of civilizational progress and legal certainty, compared with those of the Achaemenids’ Ancient Near Eastern predecessors. Objects of comparison have not least been the kings of the Neo-Assyrian Empire. Until recently, people also claimed that a trustworthy evaluation had been hindered by the Greco- or Eurocentrism and/or Orientalism of research; the image of the Persian kings was said to be still largely determined by stereotypes like that of “Oriental despotism,” while imperial structures and social and political conditions in the empire have remained, on the whole, relatively unknown (“forgotten empire”) (but see Messerschmidt 2006 on Curtis and Tallis 2005).

The situation is more complicated. On the one hand, the Persian Empire is surely no longer a “forgotten” empire; the tour of the Cyrus Cylinder, well-attended exhibitions of Persian art, the exploding literature on the Achaemenid Empire since the start of the standard-setting “Achaemenid History Workshops,” and the entry of Achaemenid motifs into modern pop and entertainment culture prove otherwise. The question is to what extent such knowledge is historically resilient and representative of recent research. On the other hand, however, and this is to be admitted, many ancient historians and academic instructors (as well as many intellectuals and non-intellectuals in Europe and the United States) still have major problems with acknowledging the

historical role of the adjacent cultures of Greece and Rome and their influence, with pursuing approaches to global or entangled history, with pointing to the diversity and time-, space-, and genre-conditioned nature of Greek or European views of ancient Persia as well as to the effective force of the stereotypes of eastern barbarians (Wiesehöfer 2007b, 2009). And Egyptology and Assyriology, for a long time philological rather than historical disciplines, have long enough shown only little interest in the “late periods” of their research objects. However, this is no longer the case (Van de Mieroop 2013), and research on the Achaemenids has been given additional impetus precisely because of the exceptionally good source material of those regions (for the state of affairs, see Wiesehöfer 2013b: pp. 25–32; Rollinger 2014b).

Moreover, the discourse on despotism as an allegedly orient-inherent burden of political systems in the Near East is still not over (for the beginnings and the early modern revival of such a discourse, see Bichler 2007; Nippel 2013; for Iranian reactions Jahanpour 2014). We do not need to discuss here the only linguistically useful Aryan concept and its abuse under the Nazis and in today’s neo-Nazi circles in Europe and the United States (Wiesehöfer 1990; Wiedemann 2010). In any event, not only Nazi ideologues but also historians between 1933 and 1945 had great difficulties in explaining the end of the empire of the Persians, normally celebrated as racially and spiritually akin. As a rule, it was then argued that the Persians had succumbed to the “embrace-ment of the Semitic Orient” (Bichler 2001).

The research landscape is also divided methodologically. Some conclude that research must be based predominantly, if not exclusively, on the sources from the soil of the Persian Empire. Others inveigh against the underestimation of the historical value of western sources for a reconstruction of Persian institutions and historical events. However, views of an imagined foreign or even counter-world are at least as real and historical as carefully uncovered structures or events. And in the case of an author like Herodotus, scholars were able to show his familiarity with ancient oriental motifs and traditions, and his fascinating way of arranging, revising, or adjusting them according to his literary needs (Rollinger 2018).

Let us now turn to the comparison of the Persian Empire with that of the Persians’ Ancient Near Eastern predecessors. This leads to questions such as: What distinguishes the Persian Empire and Persian rule in ideology and practice from those of the Assyrians, Babylonians, or Elamites? Where can we find continuities, where change? Did Persian institutions end with Alexander’s conquest? And last but not least, what about post-Achaemenid *ideas* of Persia and their historical and cultural impact?

In recent decades, specialists in Achaemenid history among ancient historians and Assyriologists have rightly drawn our attention to the fact that the Teispid-Achaemenid kingdom – not least in its ideological foundation, but

also in its forms of representation and its depiction of the ruler–subject relationship – can be described as an Ancient Near Eastern monarchy, that even its organizational structures are those of an ancient oriental empire (see Rollinger 2014b for the state of research). It had been the periphery (again) from which this new empire had emerged, and it did not only take over ideas of the older ones but was even able to get acknowledged as rightful heir to the thrones of Babylonia (Babylonian kinglists) or Egypt (Ptolemaic Canon); those lists do not make a clear distinction between “empires” or “dynasties.” This is also why textbooks on the Ancient Near East in general no longer end with 539 BCE but with 330/323 BCE, or an even later date. And this explains why, according to the spatial or content focus of studies, different continuities and discontinuities have been considered relevant. Methodologically, it is always binding for scholars to look for possible Ancient Near Eastern models or parallels when supposedly quite exceptional (in both a positive and a negative sense) Persian institutions are involved (such as the ensuring of local autonomy or religious “tolerance” on the one hand, strict supervision, deportations, harsh measures of punishment, destructions of temples, etc. on the other). Additionally, we have to place both these institutions and their alleged models in their respective historical context and, at the same time, take into account the presumable intentions of the sources’ authors or commissioners. Some institutions (such as the deportations or the abduction of idols) then appear as more traditional rather than singular phenomena (Rollinger 2018; see Chapter 61 Migration and Deportation), others (like many of the alleged Persian measures of punishment) as greatly exceptional and therefore questionable because their mention in Greek literature aims at proving the otherness of the enemy and his barbarous constitution in an exemplary way (Rollinger 2010).

However, there are significant differences between Persian ideology and institutions and those of the Assyrians, Babylonians, and Elamites. Firstly, the Persian Empire surpassed all its predecessors in size, which made it necessary to have a higher degree of ideological and political-administrative flexibility, new forms of military security and diplomacy, and a higher level of infrastructural and organizational development. It is therefore not surprising that Herodotus and Ctesias made that kingdom the third and last in their scheme of the succession of empires, a scheme that, in an expanded and eschatologically revised Judeo-Christian form, ultimately helped to shape the western view of history until well into modern times.

Secondly, the ideological center of the empire now lay in the highlands of Iran. Persis and the other Iranian regions now received particular attention, and membership in the Persian or Aryan ethnocultural community now became particularly advantageous. This shift is evident both in the development of an Iranian “*éthno-classe dominante*” (Briant 1988) and in the

endogenous marriage policy of the kings (Brosius 1996; Wiesehöfer 2015). Additionally, the kings now used not just Near Eastern but also Iranian ideas and concepts in their pronouncements (Wiesehöfer 2013c), and Darius and his successors stressed their particularly close connection to an “Aryan” God, Auramazda, without, however, becoming dogmatic and uncompromising in issues of religious policy. On the whole, the kings presented themselves differently in different parts of the empire, for example in Babylonia as Babylonian kings and in Egypt as Egyptian pharaohs. Only some of the Assyrian kings had tried to engage as kings of Babylon as well, and, as far as we know, the Neo-Babylonian kings had never behaved in a similar way but had been keen to demonstrate the Babylonian character of their kingship. Besides, only with the Achaemenids a dynasty was reestablished like in Neo-Assyrian times; the Teispids had not been able to do so. But the idea of dynastic succession was conceptualized in a new way (for reasons of legitimation): for the first time in Ancient Near Eastern history, a dynastic name was derived from an ancestor by labeling all members of the lineage “Achaemenids” (Rollinger this volume, Chapter 27 From Assurbanipal to Cambyses).

Thirdly, areas outside the empire and foreign enemies are not mentioned in royal ideology, at least in the inscriptions ordered after 519 BCE. That leaves the impression that Darius and his successors identified the borders of the empire with the limits of the world; Darius even claimed to have transcended this ultimate borderline (Rollinger 2013). The Achaemenid Empire thus knew the idea of a universal empire (*sine fine*) propagated and symbolically promulgated by the king. There was also considerable imitation of kingly behavior and royal virtues by the provincial and local elites. Fourthly, there was never a process of “Persianization” at work comparable to the processes normally referred to as Romanization among classicists, and there was no such Persian sense of mission as we can find, for example, in Roman literary works. Fifthly and finally, the Achaemenids, unlike the authorities of Mesopotamia, who had never been able to successfully control the mountain peoples of the Zagros, completely revised the king–subject relationship there: one part of the communities of the mountain range permanently turned to agricultural activities after the conversion of pastures into arable land, others were able to preserve their identity as pastoralists and to exchange military service commitment for gifts and privileges and/or became part of the regional economic system (Balatti 2017).

As for the afterlife of Achaemenid rule (cf. Panaino 2014; Briant 2015), there is controversy in recent research over the question of a direct or indirect influence of the Persian Empire on later empires. This is evident above all in the various assessments of Alexander, who is considered either the “last Achaemenid” or simply a singular ruler in a new era (see e.g. Briant 2002: pp. 875–876; Müller 2014: pp. 240–242 vs. Wiemer 2007: pp. 281–309),

but it also emerges in postulated Achaemenid reminiscences during the Seleucid Empire (cf. Plischke 2014: pp. 325–334). Undoubtedly, institutions created by the Persians and their subjects continued to live on and to exert influence in the Hellenistic period and in some cases even later. This influence can be detected in the provincial administration, in palace and garden architecture, in infrastructure and communication networks, in irrigation systems, in language policy, but also in elements of court culture and court ceremonial. However, even more important than this process of “Persianization” seems to have been the fascination with the *idea* of Persia (“Persianism”), i.e. “the post-Achaemenid construction of (the) cultural memory (of Persia) in the context of new and varied political and cultural contexts” (Strootman and Versluys 2017). Some Hellenistic or later Iranian kings even tried to produce dynastic links to the Persian royal house or aristocratic Iranian satrapal families (kings of Commagene, Pontus, Armenia, Parthia, etc.). It has not yet been finally clarified why and when the memory of the historic Achaemenids got lost in Iran; in the author’s view, it was probably in Late Parthian times and because of the impact of the Eastern Iranian oral tradition (Wiesehöfer 2005: pp. 129–149).

The extent to which Persians or Persian subjects generated or enabled cultural contacts has been shown especially for Hellas, where the empire could serve as an imperial model or as a model in the field of political representation, where cultural expressions and status symbols or objects from the Persian Empire were transferred into new contexts. This exchange was part of an ongoing dialogue between people of the “oriental” and the “Greek” worlds, a dialogue that became more intense and symmetric over time and certainly also left elite circles – just think of the many mercenaries, craftsmen, deportees, and refugees in the Persian Empire. However, cultural contact between Greeks and barbarians often did not take place directly; it was channeled through mediators who were neither Greeks nor members of the oriental cultures in which the mediated cultural goods had originally been located. Over the course of time, however, the diversity of Greek views of and attitudes toward the traditions and peculiarities of neighboring cultures was supplanted by views of the Orient that left less room for differences and nuances. They made a clear distinction between the positively assessed “self” and the very different “foreign,” often connoted as threatening or inferior. This opposition between Greeks and barbarians was later turned into a veritable East–West or Asia–Europe antithesis. This can be seen by today’s regularly observable efforts to declare the Athenian victory over Darius I’s army at Marathon (490 BCE) or the success of the ships of the so-called Hellenic League ten years later at Salamis the birth cry of Europe. It is also evident in the attempts to justify the exclusion of Turkey from the European Community not on the basis of the country’s human rights record or other such issues but through

the imagined loss of European identity that opponents see as an inevitable consequence. This identity, however, is itself the result of a perpetual process of self-discovery (Wiesehöfer 2013d with the older literature; on the supposed beginnings of the world-historical interpretative pattern of an opposition between Europe and Asia in antiquity, cf. Bichler 2014).

Modern observers cannot really determine the extent of submissive consent, acceptance, and rejection of the ideological and actual royal Achaemenid “order of peace.” But an uncritical glorification of Persian rule dictated by the needs of the present moment is as untimely and inappropriate as the simple juxtaposition of “Greek freedom” or “Greek individualism” and “Oriental despotism” which can still frequently be encountered in Europe. Ultimately, the Achaemenid Empire possessed a remarkable vitality thanks to a number of factors: a highly pragmatic, often traditional, royal policy for the benefit of many subjects; a high degree of autonomy granted and structural “tolerance”; and not least a strict and sometimes relentless supervision that it also owed partly to its Assyrian, Babylonian, and Elamite heritage. The empire’s end was mainly due to the overwhelming military and tactical skill of its Macedonian military opponent, not to a lack of internal cohesion or to administrative or economic crises (Wiesehöfer 2007c; Rollinger 2014b).

Ancient Iran in Today’s Iran

Up until the 1960s, the history of Achaemenid Iran had had no real significant place in the cultural memory of most Iranians, and the sites of ancient Iran had long been known only by the names they had acquired under the influence of the mythical Iranian or the Islamic traditions: as Naqsh-e Rostam (“Image of Rostam”) or Takht-e Jamshid (“Throne of Jamshid” = Persepolis), for example. Accordingly, the results of European and American excavations in Susa and Persepolis and in other places had only become known to the people who had lived near the sites and to experts and intellectuals. This changed dramatically, when, after preliminary attempts in Qajar times, the last Pahlavi shah began to claim the rulers of antiquity (Cyrus included) as his “ancestors” in order to legitimate his rule and to discredit Islam. It was not least the idea of Cyrus as a benefactor of mankind that outlived all anti-Achaemenid polemic of anti-monarchic intellectuals and Shiite clerics and, in the shape of the Cylinder from Babylon, “continues to captivate the Iranian (nationalist) imagination to this day” (Pistor-Hatam 2007; Ansari 2012: pp. 166–179; quote: p. 176). As shown above, this idea still unites many Iranians in Iran and in the diaspora today, no matter what their political orientation. “It is now almost desirable to rely on the entire 3000 years of Persian civilization instead of just 28 years since the Khomeinist revolution. The mullahs’

regime does not want the maintenance of national heritage to be left to its opponents. Under the Khomeini regime that would have been unthinkable” (Lau 2007). In light of this it is not surprising that even the human rights advocate Shirin Ebadi, to mention but one voice, called herself a “daughter of Cyrus the Great” in her speech on the occasion of her receiving the Nobel prize (http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2003/ebadi-lecture-e.html, accessed January 15, 2015). Nor is it surprising that the audience of the Iranian program of the BBC recently chose Cyrus as one of the six most influential Iranians of all times (<http://www.mohammadmossadegh.com/news/most-influential-iranians>; accessed January 15, 2015). Finally, it was not least president Ahmadinejad who tried to use the Cyrus legend to his own advantage. Like the shah in 1971, he visited Cyrus’ tomb in Pasargadae to set the scene for his presidency and to utilize the beneficial publicity of the site. What is more, he opened the exhibition of the Cyrus Cylinder in Teheran in 2010 in a no less spectacular way (<http://www.payvand.com/news/10/sep/1135.html>; accessed January 15, 2015; cf. also his opinion on Cyrus as quoted in Ansari 2012: p. 198). However, when we visit Pasargadae and Persepolis today, we can see at first glance that they have become memorial sites for the Iranian general public irrespective of the political convictions of its members.

Ancient Iran is very much en vogue in Iran today, and the Achaemenid period has become no less important than the Sasanid epoch that has ever been a prominent part of the national history tradition. On the one hand, this is due to a combination of nationalism and an attitude that is critical of today’s regime or sometimes even of Islam. On the other hand, for those who support the present regime, it is the possibility – or need? – to play the upholder of Iranian greatness and of Cyrus’ legacy that makes the myths of Achaemenid history so attractive. Iranians’ fierce reaction to the movies “300” and “Alexander” prove that a more relaxed attitude toward western “orientalistic” views, despite scholarship’s efforts to unmask them, obviously needs more time (for ancient Persia in cinema, see Soward 2014; a more thorough critique of “Orientalistic” views in those films can be found in Llewellyn-Jones 2009 and especially in Müller forthcoming). This is also true for myths of the historical significance of “catastrophes” (Alexander, Arab, Mongol, or Afghan invasions, etc.) that are said to have haunted Iran at different times without having been able to destroy the core of Iranian existence and identity (“Iranian-ness”) (Pistor-Hatam 2014a,b; for studies in the historical Iranian identity, see Cereti 2010).

Iranians had hitherto dreamed of *Iranshahr*; now they appeared on the verge of realizing it. With Iranian influence extending into Afghanistan and Iraq, the political identity of Sasanian Iran appeared to be re-emerging, not only in a

material but more profoundly in an ideational sense. Traditional units of territorial analysis no longer appeared to apply; the clear boundaries of modernity suddenly became more opaque as a distinctly Iranian world encroached on that which had hitherto been Arabic. Inside Iran too, the old boundaries appeared to dissolve in the wake of a renewed interest in the historical mythology of Iran and the meanings it imparted. It was no longer a case of Cyrus *or* Jamshid – the nation embraced them both.

(Ansari 2012: p. 298)

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FURTHER READING

For the state of research on the Teispid-Achaemenid Empire it is best to read the articles of these two volumes. There, readers may also find information about and an assessment of many of the problems discussed here. As for perceptions of Ancient Iran in Iran itself, the best way is to consult the books of or edited by Ali Ansari (Ansari 2012; 2014). For general remarks on historiography and the history of meaning in Iran, cf. Pistor-Hatam (2014b: pp. 1–101). For Cyrus and the Cyrus Cylinder, one should consult Van Der Spek (2014), and Shayegan 2018.

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